



Language in Washington

FLENJ Advocacy Update

Written by Amanda Seewald, M.Ed.

Amanda Seewald serves as the FLENJ President and Advocacy/JNCL Representative, NNELL Liaison, and is an elected member of the JNCL-NCLIS Board of Directors.

New Jersey signs the Seal of Biliteracy into Law

After a two year, extremely successful pilot program and several months of non-stop lobbying including meetings with state Senators and legal counsel for the Governor of New Jersey, we are very happy to report that on January 12, 2016, Governor Chris Christie signed the Seal of Biliteracy legislation into law, making New Jersey the 16th state to do so.

After receiving outspoken support from Senators Shirley Turner and Teresa Ruiz, this new legislation passed the Senate unanimously (37-0) and passed the Assembly with incredibly strong support (72-2).

This great advocacy win was realized as a result of ongoing collaboration between leaders at FLENJ and NJTESOL/NJBE. Through the generous advocacy support provided by The Partnership for a New Economy for America (PNAE), New Jersey was able to achieve this goal of having a state driven Seal of Biliteracy program.

The state will begin to administer the Seal of Biliteracy in the 2016-17 academic year as is written in the legislation. Beginning this September, the NJDOE will be the point of contact for your school to take part in the Seal of Biliteracy.

This year there are ... schools taking part in the Seal of Biliteracy and more than 700 students across the state will be earning this honor. The Seal of Biliteracy continues to grow as a clear indicator that our students are aiming at the true goal of meaningful global citizenship. FLENJ has been proud to be a part of the development of this crucial initiative and it is our hope that the Seal becomes a significant piece of the fabric of language education across New Jersey.

www.sealofbiliteracy.org

What you can do...

Make colleagues, administrators, and parents aware of the Seal of Biliteracy. Let them know how crucial recognition of student proficiency growth is for your district, your school, and for your program development. All students in all districts across New Jersey deserve the opportunity to reach higher proficiency levels. Show your community how the Seal of Biliteracy can help achieve that goal!

What is the Seal of Biliteracy?

The Seal of Biliteracy is an award given by a school, school district or county office of education in recognition of students who have studied and attained proficiency in two or more languages by high school graduation. The Seal of Biliteracy takes the form of a gold seal that appears on the transcript or diploma of the graduating senior and is a statement of accomplishment for future employers and for college admissions.

Why is the Seal of Biliteracy important?

The goal of this initiative is to elevate the perceived status of the bilingual student, thereby promoting continued language study and drawing the attention of colleges and future employers. The Seal of Biliteracy is the mark of a student developing true Global Competence.

[NJDOE Seal of Biliteracy information to share with your school or district.](#)

Advocacy Articles and Resources:

- To learn about JNCL – NCLIS visit languagepolicy.org
- Visit the FLENJ website at www.flenj.org and see the informational flyer given to our legislators
- Learn how to invite your member of Congress to a language program at www.actfl.org.

Spring 2016 Highlights:

Seal of Biliteracy	1
JNCL Legislative Days 2016 Highlights	2
Leader Pledge	2
In Their Own Words	3
Even More News and Resources	3

"Foreign language instruction in schools can reverse achievement gaps, leaving children better prepared for the 21st century workforce." Bill Rivers, Executive Director JNCL-NCLIS

JNCL-NCLIS Legislative Days 2016: Aiming to affect change and augment opportunity

This year the JNCL-NCLIS Legislative Days took place at the end of February. This timing was specifically planned to allow us to have the most impact on the appropriations process on Capitol Hill. In all, language educators and advocates from 30 states and the District of Columbia took 135 meetings with legislators and executive offices. The goal of these meetings was to garner support for fiscal year 2017 appropriations to support language education funding. Some of our legislative priorities this year included: [The World Language Advancement Act](#) and [Student Support & Academic Enhancement Grants—Title IV](#).

In addition to Capitol Hill meetings, we had the opportunity to hear from Sonia Zamborsky, Director of Global Product Field Support and Communications for Marriott International. Sonia shared great insight regarding the need for proficient linguistic and cultural proficiency. She explained, “Cultural competence wins business”. Following this excellent presentation, the JNCL delegates heard from Mohamed Abdel-Kader, Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Office of International and Foreign Language Education (IFLE) at the U.S. Department of Education (USED). Mohamed further discussed the value of language and culture in the business sector and discussed the awareness campaign being put forth by his office. Learn more about this on Twitter [@GoGlobalED](#).

Marty Abbott, JNCL-NCLIS President and ACTFL Executive Director, shared an update on the AAAS Study on language learning in the United States. This crucial national study commissioned by Congress will provide much needed data and information to further legislation and policy. View the update here: [AAAS Study Update](#).

JNCL-NCLIS presented the Rush D. Holt Award to Congressman Sam Farr of California for his more than 20 years of service and unwavering support for language education. Our own former congressman and the award’s namesake, Rush Holt was there and spoke about Representative Farr’s dedication. Congressman Farr shared, “If you want to buy something, all you need is money, but if you want to sell something, you better speak the language of the buyer.”

The Joint National Committee on Language and National Council for Languages and International Studies is a coalition of state, regional and national education associations and language-focused enterprises. JNCL-NCLIS advocates with legislators on Capitol Hill to help influence and assist in the development of national language education priorities and policy.

What you can do...

Simply copy and paste the LEADER Pledge into a an email, letter, or FB message to your legislator! Ask them to write, speak, tweet, or post their support.

Ask your legislator to take the LEADER Pledge!

Language Education for American Development and Economic Realization

Be a vocal LEADER for New Jersey and help forge a globally successful future for American children.

- ✓ Make your voice heard by releasing an official statement in support of language education! Say it, write it, and post it!
- ✓ Ask businesses in your state how language proficiency is important to them
- ✓ Take action by supporting and voting in favor of legislation that will help our nation fulfill its role as a global leader, and will empower our children with a bilingual and internationally focused education.



Promoting excellence in world language education by advancing policy and practice
www.flenj.org

In Their Own Words...

A section devoted to hearing the words of advocates for language education. Is there someone whose voice you would like to hear on the value of language education? Contact us at www.flenj.org



New Jersey State Senator Patrick Diegnan

“The foundation of New Jersey’s prosperity has always been how well we educate our people. This has never been more true than it is today. In a 21st-century world where the internet and globalization has made the world smaller, where a child born in East Brunswick is now competing with a child in New Delhi, bilingual education is no longer just a pathway to opportunity and success, it’s a prerequisite for success,” said Senator Patrick Diegnan (D-Middlesex). “We need to become multilingual, and digitally connected. If we put the world into world-class education, we will also give young people a powerful tool and distinct advantage in a job market that is becoming international by necessity”.



What you can do...

Write a note or post your thanks publically to Senator Diegnan.

Even More News and Resources

- Let parents know about the value of world language education. [Visit our advocacy page](#) and share resources with them. Invite a FLENJ Board member to speak to parents at a school or district event. Encourage them to join the [Parents for Language](#) group on Facebook to keep up to date and be a part of the discussion.
- One of our best assets as a profession is our drive to always do more for our students and teach more effectively. Sign up for [Workshop Series](#) our today!
- Share your expertise with your colleagues! [Submit a proposal for the 2017 FLENJ Annual Conference.](#)
- Don’t forget to utilize the excellent resources on the [NJDOE World Language Department](#) page.