

International Education and Critical Language Initiatives  
Washington Update: February 27, 2006

**Two New Reports to Congress Galvanize Action on Science, Technology, Engineering, Math (STEM), International Studies and Critical Foreign Languages**

***Rising Above the Gathering Storm: Energizing and Employing America for a Brighter Economic Future***

*National Academy of Sciences*

<http://darwin.nap.edu/books/0309100399/html>

Last summer Congress asked the National Academy of Sciences to examine what concrete steps they could take to enhance the science and technology enterprise “so the United States can prosper and be secure in the global community of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.”

*Rising Above the Gathering Storm: Energizing and Employing America for a Brighter Economic Future* was released in the fall and identified two key challenges: creating high-quality jobs for Americans and responding to the nation’s need for clean, affordable, and reliable energy. To address those challenges the Academy report made four basic recommendations and twenty actions to implement them.

The first recommendation called for “vastly improving K-12 math and science education by recruiting 10,000 of America’s brightest students to the teaching profession each year; using proven models to strengthen the skills and compensation of 250,000 current K-12 teachers; and creating opportunities and incentives for middle-school and high-school students to pursue advanced work in science and math.

Another recommendation called for making the U.S. the most attractive place to study and perform research in order to attract the best and brightest students, scientists, and engineers from within the U.S. and throughout the world by providing 25,000 new 4-year undergraduate scholarships and other actions aimed at higher education science and math.

The Academy was asked to focus only on STEM issues and therefore did not look at the broader definition of 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills that will be required to succeed in the global marketplace.

***Education for Global Leadership: The Importance of International Studies and Foreign Language Education for U.S. Economic and National Security***

*Committee For Economic Development (CED)*

<http://www.ced.org/>

This February the Committee For Economic Development (CED), a well-respected, independent research and policy organization of over 200 business leaders and educators, released its report: *Education for Global Leadership: The Importance of International Studies and Foreign Language Education for U.S. Economic and National Security*.

The Committee identified the national security, economic and multicultural challenges facing the nation and the fact that American students lack sufficient knowledge of world regions, languages, and cultures to meet these challenges.

The report makes the case for international skills to be included on the short list of 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills our graduates will need to succeed:

*"Full participation in this new global economy will require not just competency in reading, mathematics and science, but also proficiency in foreign languages and deeper knowledge of other countries and cultures. Our efforts in education reform must be harmonized with global realities if we are to confront successfully a multitude of new and growing challenges to America's security and prosperity."*

#### **CED made three broad recommendations:**

- Ensure that international content is taught across the curriculum and at all levels of learning to expand American students' knowledge of other countries and cultures.
- Expand the training pipeline at every level of education to address the paucity of Americans fluent in foreign languages, especially critical, less-commonly taught languages.
- National leaders --- political leaders, as well as the business and philanthropic communities, and the media --- should inform the public about the importance of improving education in foreign languages and international studies.

*See Executive Summary of the CED report for recommended actions under each of these headings. ([http://www.ced.org/docs/summary/summary\\_foreignlanguages.pdf](http://www.ced.org/docs/summary/summary_foreignlanguages.pdf))*

### **National Initiatives and Legislation**

#### **January 5, 2006 --- President Calls for *National Security Language Initiative* at U.S. University Presidents Summit on International Education**

(<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2006/58733.htm>)

President Bush, Secretary of Education Spellings and Secretary of State Rice called together college and university presidents to announce a new proposal as part of the FY2007 budget that would:

- Expand the number of Americans mastering critical need languages starting at a younger age
- Increase the number of advanced-level speakers of foreign languages, with an emphasis on critical needs languages
- Increase the number of foreign language teachers and the resources for them.

Under these titles, the **U.S. Department of Education** would help 27 school districts in partnership with colleges and universities create programs in critical need languages in 2007 and create a Language Teacher Corps with the goal of having 1000 new language teachers by 2010. The **U.S. State Department** would provide study abroad opportunities for up to 3,000 high school students and 100 teachers studying critical need languages by summer 2009; help 300 native speakers of critical languages to come teach in the U.S.; help K-16 institutions establish summer student and teacher immersion experiences, academic courses and curricula targeting 3,000 students and 3,000 teachers by 2011.

**February, 2006 --- President Submits FY2007 Budget to Congress and Calls for Enactment of American Competitiveness Initiative**

(<http://www.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/competitiveness/index.html>)

The President called for a total \$5.9 billion investment --- \$1.3 billion in new federal funding and \$4.6 billion in R&D tax incentives --- to keep our “competitive edge in the world economy”. Of that amount, \$380 million would be allocated to strengthening math, science and critical language education.

In addition to new math and science initiatives, the proposal would provide a \$90 million increase for the federal **Advanced Placement** program “to bring new emphasis on training teachers and expanding opportunities for students, particularly in high-poverty schools; to take high-level AP and IB courses in math, science, and critical foreign languages.”

**February, 2006 --- SMART Grants Enacted Into Law**

As a direct result of the national attention being given to America’s place in the world and the demands by business and the military to produce high school and college graduates who have skills for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, Congress passed and the President signed legislation creating SMART Grants in February of this year.

Students now eligible for Pell Grants based on financial need would be awarded up to an additional \$4000 per year as college juniors or seniors if they maintained a 3.0 grade point average and pursued a degree in math, science, engineering, technology, or foreign languages critical to national security.

At the same time Congress passed *Academic Competitiveness Grants* for Pell- eligible freshmen (\$750) and sophomores (\$1300) who complete a rigorous high school curriculum and maintain a 3.0 GPA in college.

This action marked the first Congressional response to strengthening America’s competitiveness by strengthening our educational system and set a precedent for focusing initiatives on both STEM subjects and the international and language education agenda.

**January 26, 2006 --- Senators Domenici, Bingaman, Alexander and Mikulski introduce the PACE (“Protecting America’s Competitive Edge through Education and Research) Act.**

Demonstrating the strength of the Congressional STEM Caucus and the impact of the National Academy of Sciences report, the PACE Act now has over 60 Senate cosponsors. This popular bipartisan proposal only addressed the Academies recommendations and STEM subjects. International education and critical foreign languages are not included as of this date.

## **March, 2006 --- Senator Kennedy introduces “The Right Track for the Economy” Act and Includes Critical Foreign Languages and International Education**

Senator Kennedy will introduce his own version of a new National Defense Education Act as part of a larger competitiveness bill this week.

Among other initiatives, Kennedy’s proposal would invest in attracting high quality math, science, and critical-need foreign language teachers to high-need schools through scholarships, loan forgiveness, tax incentives, and grants for innovative postsecondary programs; and invests in NSF teacher training programs.

A separate subtitle of the proposal ***“Improving Cultural and Global Competence for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”*** would:

Create a grant program for school district and higher education partnerships to:

- expand critical need language classes in elementary grades and offer more advanced language courses in middle and high schools;
- create and implement effective models of instruction in critical need languages and world cultures
- create and maintain internationally themed schools that offer dual language immersion programs
- focus on international content
- use technology to bring the world into the classroom virtually

Establish a system of regional technical assistance centers focused on developing critical need language programs in K-12 education.

Award grants to institutions of higher education to carry out summer institute programs to help teachers integrate international content into the curricula and improve teachers’ knowledge and teaching of foreign cultures

Increase study abroad opportunities in critical-need languages for secondary school, undergraduate and graduate students.

### ***Quote from Introduction to “Education for Global Leadership” CED, 2006***

***“In short, we must re-define, as each generation has done, what it means to be an educated American in a changing world. The educated American of the twenty-first century will need to be conversant with a least one language in addition to his or her native language, and knowledgeable about other countries, other cultures, and the international dimensions of issues critical to the lives of all Americans.”***

**NOTE: Several Members of Congress Introduced Legislation Last Year to Address International Education and the Study of Critical Need Foreign Languages**

Two examples of these proposals are:

**Senators Alexander (R-TN) and Lieberman (D-CN)** introduced the U.S./China Cultural Engagement Act to deepen the peaceful business and cultural engagement of the two countries and provides Chinese language instruction in American schools and a broad array of exchange opportunities.

**Representative Holt (D-NJ)** introduced the K-16 Critical Foreign Language Pipeline Act and the National Security Language Act.

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