



# CENTER FOR THE ADVANCEMENT AND STUDY OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

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10 September 2007

Dr. Kathy Cox  
State Superintendent of Schools  
Georgia Department of Education  
Atlanta, Georgia

Dear Superintendent Cox:

There has been much discussion of late concerning proposed changes to Georgia's high school graduation requirements. I refer specifically to the proposal that will exclude two years of a modern or classical language as a requirement for graduation from high school.

The Center for the Advancement and Study of International Education, based at Atlanta International School, has a mission to promote international and language education in public and private education. I believe strongly that study of a modern language should be an integral part of the core curriculum in Georgia's public schools. Having said that, I recognize fully the issues relating to the inclusion of a two-year requirement at the High School level. The current state of language offerings in Georgia falls far short of the ideal of including language study as part of the core curriculum for all students. Given this fact, it appears dubious that an immediate insistence on two years of language study at the high school level is practicable. In itself, such a requirement will certainly not create a critical mass of students who develop a high degree of proficiency in a language other than English. I would much rather seek to develop an approach throughout Georgia whereby students can be involved in language study from an earlier age.

I strongly support the work of Elizabeth Webb, Susan Crooks and others in the Georgia Department of Education as they try to strengthen language learning opportunities for all Georgia students, not only those in high schools.

I propose two immediate ways to accomplish this without causing an undue burden on the resources of Georgia's public Middle and High Schools:

1. In all High Schools there should be access to modern/classical language courses for all students at all levels, and that where students embark on such courses they should be required to take a minimum of two years study to gain credit. Students should also have access to Levels III, IV and beyond in at least one language. This may require some cross-enrollment between schools, but should be feasible throughout the State.
2. In Middle Schools all students should have access to second language classes, and, as soon as practicable, this should become a requirement for all students in Grades 6 through 8. There may be some exceptions to this requirement, but for the vast majority of Middle School students a second language should become part of the core curriculum.

With an extensive background in international and language education, I would welcome the chance to serve on any Georgia Department of Education committee charged with advancing the study of languages in Georgia's schools. All research indicates clearly that students who study modern/classical languages do better overall, and any effort to further this in Georgia should be welcomed by all who seek to enhance public education in our State.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alex Horsley." The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line under the name.

Alex Horsley