

NATIONAL K-12 FOREIGN LANGUAGE SURVEY

The Center for Applied Linguistics has received funding from the U.S. Department of Education, Title VI International Research and Studies (IR/S) program, to conduct a national K-12 foreign language survey.

Foreign language education is in the spotlight. In the aftermath of 9/11, there has been renewed attention to the need for Americans who can communicate in more than one language. At the same time, No Child Left Behind legislation recognizes foreign languages as a core subject. To determine how well the United States is preparing students to meet the need for individuals with proficiency in critical languages, educators and policy makers alike need up-to-date, detailed information on the current status of foreign language education in this country.

In a 3-year project, the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) will replicate its 1987 and 1997 surveys of K-12 foreign language programs to identify current patterns and shifts over time in enrollment, amount of foreign language instruction, type of foreign language offerings, foreign language curricula, teacher qualifications, and other issues. Results will show trends in foreign language education over three decades.

The study aims to provide a portrait of elementary and secondary foreign language education at national and regional levels. The survey will be sent to a random sample of public and private schools. Working with Westat, a leader in survey design, CAL will use various techniques to ensure a high response rate (60% or higher), including the option of responding online. Final products will include a comprehensive report, an executive summary, and a brochure with key findings.

This project will expand our knowledge, suggest needs for increased or improved foreign language instruction, and provide data to inform language education policy at the local, state, and national levels. For more information, please contact Nancy Rhodes at CAL at 202-362-0700 or nancy@cal.org.