From the National Networking Coordinator

Bonne année! Felice anno nuovo! Felix sit annus novus! Ein gutes neues Jahr! Akemashite omedetou! ¡Feliz Año Nuevo! Xin nian kuai le! Happy New Year! No matter how you say it, welcome to 2009!

As we reflect on the past year and anticipate a new one, most of us are at the mid-point of another academic year. Before we charge into a new semester, let’s all take a moment to turn our attention to our craft: excellence in teaching, professional development, and being advocates for world languages and for the children we teach.

At this time, I would like to thank my predecessor, Jean Modig, who has spent much time ushering me in as the new National Networking Coordinator. I would also like to thank Past President Terry Caccavale and President Paula Patrick for being so supportive and wonderful to work with. Without these three ladies, this job would not be as easy or fun.

I would like to also acknowledge the appointment of two new regional Representatives. Sandra Schoder is the new Southeast Regional Representative, replacing Sylvia Amaya, who is stepping down from her role to that of Florida State Representative. Christi Moraga is the new Northeast State Representative, replacing Ginny Staugaitis.

Throughout this newsletter, you will find a vibrant network in place for early language learning in our country. That is not to say we can relax and rest on our laurels. During these times of economic uncertainty and budget shortfalls, early language programs are often considered extraneous and are thus subject to being cut. It is of paramount importance that we continue to advocate for our programs and show the value of early language education.

I am proud to be part of an organization that works so hard to bring quality professional development opportunities and advocacy to its membership. Furthermore, I am honored to now serve NNELL as your National Networking Coordinator. YOU are an organization I owe for much of my professional development, networking opportunities, and friendships. Please take advantage of one of our Regional Professional Development Workshops this year or plan to join us at the Summer Institute in Iowa in July.

Best,

Nathan Lutz
National Networking Coordinator
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Greetings from the chilly Northeast – we’ve had lots of snow this winter! First, I wish to extend a warm welcome to our new state representatives, Kristen Vrabie in Connecticut and Rob Anderson in Maryland. We hope to see many of you at the upcoming NECTFL Conference in April at the Marriott Hotel in New York City.

Regional NNELL Workshop
On January 31, 2009, the Northeast Regional Professional Development Workshop, “Formatting a Balanced Approach to Teaching and Assessment in Pre-K-8 Foreign and Second Language Classrooms” was facilitated by Dr. Helena Curtain, co-author of Languages and Children: Making the Match. Those of us who work in the field of elementary language instruction know Helena as an expert on both Immersion and FLES Education. Her workshop featured thematic planning and instruction and assessment of all skill areas (reading, writing, listening and speaking), and provided teachers from MA, CT, NY, VT, RI, NH, and OH with a day of interactive learning related to elementary foreign and second language instruction. Thanks to Helena, Terry Caccavale, and to the Holliston Public Schools for their generous donation of space to allow this workshop to take place! Special thanks go to Dr. Curtain, who is donating her time to NNELL to do several of these because she holds our cause near and dear to her heart.

Five of Holliston’s foreign language / ESL teachers were in attendance that day along with another 65 attendees. NNELL picked up 50 new members at this event.

Way to go, Northeast NNELL!!!
NEW HAMPSHIRE

Cheryl Berman
New Hampshire State Representative
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Cheryl Berman, our NNELL state rep, sends news that her “Follow the FLES Child Linguafolio” has been distributed and is in motion in 2 of the 4 schools in SAU50 district. Cheryl was a NECTFL Mead Fellows Award winner in 2007. Her project was designing a comprehensive FLES linguafolio that was fun for the students and also a comprehensive document to travel with the student upon entering middle school in order to aide teachers in understanding the new learners entering their classroom. This current linguafolio will be put on the NH Dept of Education web site hopefully by the end of this school year, June 2009. It will be available for download by anyone interested in using part or all of it depending on ones interest and needs.

Cheryl is eager to drum up more members in her state as NH has been without a rep for several years. She would appreciate any input our other reps. may have to share with her.

Cheryl will be presenting at NECTFL this spring and looks forward to meeting other state reps. We wish you good luck and hope to see you there!

NEW YORK

Diana Zuckerman
New York State Representative
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As the new New York State NNELL representative, I would like to thank the dedicated NY members and sponsor organizations for their support and advocacy for early language programs. Congratulations to Nathan Lutz, former NYS NNELL Rep, on his new position as NNELL’s National Networking Coordinator.

I would like to inform you of some of the early foreign language work being done by one of NNELL’s sponsor organizations, The New York State Association of Foreign Language Teachers (NYSALFT). NYSALFT’s website, www.nysaflt.org, maintains an excellent list of early world language programs throughout the state. NYSALFT also has a Special Interest Group (SIG) dedicated to FLES. Check it out to stay informed of the latest New York early language learning news. They are also in the process of putting together a list of NYS FLES methods courses. And, you can listen to the NYSALFT-NNELL FLES Roundtable Discussion from NYSALFT’s Fall Annual Conference with experts Terry Caccavale, Al Martino and Harriet Barnett moderated by Nathan Lutz, at www.apple.com/search/ipoditunes/?q=NYSALFT.

Dr. Eliane McKee is conducting a FLES French Class for the Jamestown, NY, homeschoolers. Students range from first to fifth grade. This is an all immersion class that meets once a week for 60 minutes. Great students!

Robert Raymond, the outgoing ACTFL LLC SIG Co-Chairperson, of New York, has been tirelessly searching for new officers at the national level. NNELL collaborates with this Special Interest Group that is dedicated to promoting the teaching and learning of early languages.

Many of the New York’s 10 regional world language associations are offering professional development opportunities specifically geared for early language teachers. Please contact me for more information and exact dates and locations. I am looking forward to serving you and NNELL. Diana Zuckerman

DELAWARE

Iris Busch
Delaware State Representative
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For 1.5 years now, the Delaware Sängerbund has a Deutsche Schule (German School). Classes meet October through May on Sundays from 2 to 4 p.m. and there are three age groups: four to six year olds, seven to ten year olds, and 11 to 16 year olds. With the help of Dr. Inke Pinkert-Sältzer, language consultant of the Central Agency for German Schools Abroad, textbooks were selected and a curriculum was developed. The three teachers regularly participate in local and regional workshops on early language learning and they develop lessons that enable and encourage the kids to pass on their language skills to their families and friends. A highlight came, when in December the children participated in the annual Delaware Sängerbund Christmas Concert. They sang in German and played instruments and the audience gave them standing ovations.

There are 32 students registered and the school expects to grow over the years. At this point, enrollment is open only for the children and grandchildren of members of the Delaware Sängerbund but there are plans to open the school to the general public. German is not offered in any of the public elementary or junior high schools in Delaware.
Kristen Vrabie  
Connecticut State Representative  
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The Connecticut COLT Rhyme Celebration is coming up on March 18th from 3:30 - 7 PM at the Lewis Mills High School in Burlington, Connecticut. Over 200 children will be performing rhymes in 15 languages. **Kristen Vrabie** and **Christi Moraga** are the co-chairs, while **Beth Lapman** and **Carol Dault** are the site hosts. All are welcome.

**Maloney Interdistrict Magnet School Celebrates 15 Years of Japanese**

(by Jessica Haxhi)

As of February 3rd, Maloney Interdistrict Magnet School in Waterbury, Connecticut will have been offering Japanese FLES classes for 15 years. All students in grades K-4 receive Japanese language instruction three times per week for 25 minutes. Fifth graders have one 25 minute and one 50 minute period per week. Pre-kindergarten students have an introductory class once per week, beginning in February each year. There are two full-time Japanese teachers, **Kazumi Yamashita** (K, 1, and 2) and **Jessica Haxhi** (3, 4, 5 and Pre-K). Originally funded by a Foreign Language Assistance Program grant, the Japanese Language and Culture Program is now fully supported by magnet school grant funds. Regular advocacy initiatives include a yearly Summer Festival for first graders, weekend “Lunch with the Senseis” at a local Japanese restaurant, an extensive website, making “good” phone calls to parents, and participation by the teachers in a variety of school activities. Teachers strive to constantly update curriculum, integrate technology, and use organized a parent-student trip of 47 people to Japan for the first time.

**How was Japanese chosen?**

When Maloney Magnet School was originally created, a group of teachers and administrators knew that a foreign language component would compliment the multicultural curriculum. At the time, grant funding was needed to start a new program. Funding was only available for “Critical” Languages (those of national security and economic importance rarely being taught) as determined by the U.S. Secretary of Education. Those were Japanese, Chinese, Arabic, Korean and Russian languages. Of those, Japanese seemed the best in terms of being able to find a teacher and materials. A model Japanese program already existed in the East Hartford-Glastonbury Magnet School. The committee chose Japanese, hired a teacher (Jessica-sensei) and designed the program. The JLC Program began at Maloney on February 3, 1994. It was funded by the federal Foreign Language Assistance Program (FLAP), with matching funds provided by the City of Waterbury.

**Who takes Japanese?**

Currently, all students in grades K-4 receive Japanese language instruction three times per week for 25 minutes. Fifth grades have one 25 minute and one 50 minute period per week. There are two full-time Japanese teachers, **Kazumi Yamashita** (K, 1, and 2) and **Jessica Haxhi** (3, 4, 5 and Pre-K). We are hoping to continue our pre-kindergarten introduction to Japanese again this year sometime after January, once per week.

**What do the students learn?**

The JLC Curriculum is based on the National Standards for Foreign Language Learning. There are five main goals (the five “Cs”): Communication, Culture, Connections (to other subjects), Comparisons (to their own language and culture) and Communities (using the language in and out of school). Keeping in mind all of these large goals, we determined the type of tasks that students should be able to do in the language, and combined that with some of the concepts they are learning in their regular classrooms. We try to “recycle” vocabulary and concepts often, adding new material each year. The best way to deliver these concepts is through thematic, story-like or project-based units that incorporate a variety of vocabulary, grammar, and subject area content. By the end of fifth grade, we expect students to be able to carry out a variety of tasks in the language, such as introducing themselves, asking for directions, shopping, ordering food, and talking about their interests.
For the first time in a long time, the MaFLA (Massachusetts Foreign Language Association) Annual Fall Conference included a complete Early Language Learning strand. Among the presenters for this strand was the ACTFL 2008 Teacher of the Year, Janet Glass of New Jersey. Janet, an elementary teacher, presented a three hour workshop on Saturday. Her session, *From Talk to Tech: Twenty Standards-Based Activities to Use in Thematic Units, K-8 and Beyond*, was very enthusiastically received by teachers of all levels. A portion of her workshop can be viewed on the www.ACTFL.org website if you missed her at MaFLA. The following link goes directly to her power point presentation, which is definitely worth seeing!

http://actfl.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=4819

We were also fortunate to count among the presenters Massachusetts' own **Terry Caccavale**, then President of NNELL. On Friday, Terry shared with us some of the resources and benefits available through NNELL. Then, on Saturday, her session, Empowering Students to Become Life-Long Learners through Reading in the Target Language, made a very strong case for how foreign language study supports English Language Arts and the high stakes MCAS tests.

Additionally, we had a very popular session offered by a group of Glastonbury, CT teachers who shared their secrets to creating a classroom environment rich in meaningful communication. A team of Springfield Public School teachers shared their district’s process for designing a Foreign Language Instructional Guide (FLIG), from philosophy to daily implementation.

At the MaFLA business meeting following the conference, **Nancy Mangari**, the MA State Representative to NNELL and long-time early language learning teacher, was elected as the Second Vice President of the association. After five years as a Board member, she will serve another four years moving through the executive track leading to the Presidency in 2011. Early Language Learning will continue to be on MaFLA’s agenda. Congratulations to Nancy!

**NEW JERSEY**

Amanda Seewald  
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New Jersey has been going through many cuts to local district budgets. This makes it a very difficult climate for program growth, however, our state organization, FLENJ, has been working on new advocacy strategies as well as continuing with its tradition of exceptional professional development opportunities. FLENJ has introduced a new podcast contest to encourage educators and their students to celebrate the value of learning languages.

The FLENJ conference will take place in Somerset, NJ on March 20 and 21. Find out more at www.flenj.org. In addition, I have continued to send updates with links and interesting articles to all NJ members on a biweekly basis. It is my hope that during this upcoming year I can hold a NNELL world languages information session for parents to empower parents to advocate on behalf of early language programs in their local districts.

**MARYLAND**

Rob Anderson  
Maryland State Representative  
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Montgomery County (Maryland’s largest school district) just submitted its school budget of $4.1 billion. It is an increase but the smallest one in 10 years, so we will have to see if it impacts language programs in the schools.

While not in Maryland, we are very excited to have a sitting U.S. President living just over the state line who appreciates the value of early language learning. These remarks made on the campaign trail are listed here: http://www.jabberu.com/earlylearning.php?page=overview#OBAMA. I can’t think of any stronger endorsement that can be made in support of the mission of NNELL!
News from the Southeast

Sandra Schoder,
Southeast Regional Representative
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Our region will be very active during the spring months. NNELL will be well represented at SCOLT and SCFLTA thanks to the great work by Georgia State Representative Vicki Welch-Alvis, and South Carolina State Representative Kathy Young. At SCOLT, several sessions concerning early language learning will be offered, and the Southeast State Representatives will meet and discuss strategies on how to recognize students in early language learning programs which can help to both improve our membership enrollment and demonstrate students' foreign language skills and knowledge.

NNELL President Paula Patrick and Virginia State Representative Beatrix Preusse-Burr, have organized an outstanding NNELL Regional Professional Development Workshop for the Southeast Region that is now open for enrollment. Dr. Marjorie Hall-Haley will be presenting a workshop entitled, “Meeting the Needs of All Learners” on April 25 in Fairfax, VA.

Other local events includes the annual International Day on March 7, 2009 in Pinellas County supported by Florida State Representative Sylvia Amaya, which looks like it will be a great success.

As Southeast Regional Representative, I had the chance to visit the German Partial-Immersion Program at Orange Hunt Virginia, Fairfax County, Virginia. The program started in 1994 and is based on content matter instruction. The subjects Math, Science, and Health are taught in German. Virginia State Representative Beatrix Preusse-Burr organized a well-structured day and shared her experience and program. Fairfax County Public Schools has 13 programs in different languages such as French, German, Japanese, and Spanish. We observed German classrooms from 1st to 6th grades. Seeing students using the target language to discuss and learn subject matters in the public school system in the US was a truly unique and inspiring experience. We met enthusiastic and experienced teachers who are interested in making learning interesting for their students. I am very appreciative for a great day in Fairfax County and I am looking forward to visit more programs in the Southeast Region. Thank you very much Orange Hunt German students, teachers, and Beatrix Preusse-Burr.

The Southeast Region is looking for new State Representatives in Louisiana and Mississippi. If you are interested or know someone who might be, please E-mail: sandra.schoder@gmail.com. The role of state reps is outlined at http://nnell.org/officers_state.php - click on “State Representative Responsibilities.”
**FLORIDA**

Sylvia Amaya  
Florida State Representative  
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Two early language elementary teachers from the state of Florida were recognized at the FFLA/ACTFL conference during the awards breakfast. **Ashleigh Smith** was the recipient of the 2008 “Elementary Language Teacher of Promise” award. Ms. Smith is a first grade gifted teacher in a Spanish partial immersion program who from Day I taught integrated content in Spanish and only speaks to the students in Spanish. **Yadira Vega** was awarded the “Early Language Teacher of the Year” award. Mrs. Vega teaches first grade in a dual language class where her students are achieving test scores above the district’s expectations. Congratulations to both of these NNELL members!

Also at the ACTFL/FFLA conference, several wonderful, hands-on, early language workshops were attended by many K-12 teachers. Many ideas for the classroom and activities were shared among all. At the FLLA booth, a unique FLES basket made with many elementary materials was awarded. **Linda Markely**, from Brevard’s schools in Florida, is in charge of putting together baskets with different themes and each year during our conference, the elementary basket proves to be a favorite among the teachers.

Pinellas County will hold its annual International Day on March 7, 2009. More than 500 students are expected to attend and many of them are elementary early language students. These students will participate in a variety of speaking events, including extemporaneous declamations, memorized passages and dramatic presentations. They will also enjoy dozens of hands-on cultural workshops presented by teachers of world languages. International Day begins with a “Parade of Nations” as part of an opening assembly giving the children an opportunity to dress with authentic clothing from around the world.

This year, Pinellas County is honored to have **Mr. John DeMado** be part of the International Day activities. We are all looking forward to singing and dancing in different languages with Mr. DeMado.

**GEORGIA**

Vicki Welch-Alvis  
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Plan to join your Georgia NNELL Colleagues at the Southern Conference on Language Teaching in Atlanta on March 5-7. For more information: go to scolt.webnode.com.

Two Georgia school systems are getting a foot in the door for early language learning by implementing International Baccalaureate programs. Gwinnett County Public Schools, located in the Atlanta metro area, is expanding International Baccalaureate and/or international-focus programs at elementary, middle, and high school levels to include year-long foreign language instruction, citizenship curriculum, and preparation for international economic and cultural opportunities. NNELL member, **David Jahner**, director of foreign languages for the Gwinnett system, is developing a content-based curriculum for use in the expanded IB programs. On the Georgia coast, NNELL member **Pat Nix** started a brand new Spanish program at C.B. Greer Elementary, which is an International Baccalaureate candidate school in the Glynn County school system.

**NORTH CAROLINA**

Jennifer Roth  
North Carolina State Representative  
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**Stephanie Anderson** is stepping down from the position of North Carolina State Representative. Thank you for your service to NNELL! We wish her well! Please welcome **Jennifer Roth**!

Registration is open for the Southeast Regional Professional Development Workshop  
for details, please go to www.nnell.org
SOUTH CAROLINA

Katherine Young
South Carolina State Representative
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The SC Foreign Language Teacher’s Assoc. SCFLTA will have its state conference Feb. 20 & 21. NNELL will be actively recruiting members.

Several NNELL members will be presenting. Lynn Fulton-Archer, SCOLT’s President from Rock Hill, SC is presenting a session called “Making a Case for Languages: A Roadmap to Advocacy” where she will share information on how to build support of language programs in everyday activities and communication.

Kathy Young, the NNELL representative for SC and SCFLTA board member along with Dianne Mundo will have a workshop on the Friday of the conference. They will share activities for encouraging interaction in the classroom and retention of expressions, using PowerPoint presentations to promote speaking and literacy, activities for young learners, discussions about the best way to use the limited minutes, and ideas for survival in an early learning classroom. A CD and a handout will be provided. This workshop would benefit teachers who need some new ideas and teachers who are new to elementary and middle school teaching.

FLAVA sponsored a NNELL table at its annual conference in October, 2008. Beatrix Prusse-Burr, Lisa Tumer (VA State Reps.) and Paula Patrick (President of NNELL) were on hand to educate teachers about the benefits of NNELL.

On Saturday, April 25, 2009, NNELL -VA will hold the Second Annual Regional Professional Development Workshop (Southeast Region) at Laurel Ridge Elementary School in Fairfax, VA from 9:00 am - 3:00 pm. The topic of this year’s workshop will be “Meeting the Needs of All Learners”. Marjorie Hall Haley will give the keynote address and present a workshop on including Multiple Intelligences Theory into daily teaching practices.

Other Breakout sessions will focus on the following topics:

* Multiple Intelligences Theory as a part of teaching methods
* Strategies that address the specific needs of young language learners
* Strategies that are developmentally appropriate, interactive, and involve cooperative learning
* Lessons utilizing technology in today’s classroom
* Literacy in the target language
* Integration of content and language instruction
* Middle school transition
* Strategies for heritage/fluent speakers

All NNELL members are invited to attend. Non-members may attend upon paying membership dues. Registration information is available at www.nnell.org. This workshop will be held in conjunction with Fairfax County Public Schools.
News from the Central States - East

Lynn Sessler
Central States East Regional Representative
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The 2009 Central States Conference will be held at the Hyatt Regency in Chicago from March 19-21, 2009. We are looking forward to joining our colleagues from the Central States West Region at this annual conference which will include many sessions for FLES educators.

The FLES Swap shop breakfast will be held on Saturday morning from 7:30-9:00 AM and will feature a short, informational presentation by Indiana NNELL representative Joanne Jones and her colleagues on their successful practices in creating and sustaining their network “IN-NNELL” of FLES educators. If you haven't signed up for the breakfast yet, you can do so at: https://www.web-reg.com/csc-confreg/. The Registration deadline is Monday, February 23rd.

Help us go GREEN! Instead of bringing paper copies of an idea to share, please e-mail your ideas to lssessler@new.rr.com where they will be compiled and send to all FLES Swap shop attendees. The plans are also in the works for the 2010 CSC Conference will be held from March 4-6 in Minneapolis, MN with the theme of “2020 Vision for 2010: Developing Global Competence”. Proposals are being accepted online until April 15, 2009 for this conference. Many FLES educators have asked for more sessions focused on early learning of World Languages so consider submitting a proposal today!

REGISTRATION IS OPEN FOR THE CENTRAL STATES REGIONAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP

“Formatting a Balanced Approach to Teaching and Assessment in Pre-K - 8 Foreign and Second Language Classrooms”

with Dr. Helena Curtain

in Grand Rapids, Michigan on May 15, 2009
We are excited to be hosting the 21st Annual FLESFEST this spring! This one-day workshop will be held on Saturday, March 7, 2009 at UW-Waukesha, and this year’s theme is Our Students’ Voices: Sharing Stories, Celebrating Culture. Our main session is about matching appropriate reading strategies with stories and text that are also developmentally appropriate for young learners. Then we have four breakout sessions for participants to choose from. One will be an experiential session in a less commonly taught language that models a reading lesson. Another session will be about using stories at multiple levels for a variety of ages and language levels. A third session will be focused on using stories to build practical language that get students talking. And the final breakout session is about finding the story and pulling out important language in nonfiction books. FLESFEST ends with a Make-and-Take session where participants will be creating felt board pieces out of milk filters to go with a story called Go Away, Big Green Monster! by Ed Emberly.

Also, I am fortunate enough to be attending the Leadership Academy at the Central States Conference in Chicago, IL in March. Through this program, I will be coordinating a project to get a website for the Wisconsin Network for Early Language Learning (wi-nell.org) off the ground. The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee is willing to host the website for us, and we will be linked to our state language association WAFLT as well.

The Indiana Network for Early Language Learning has established a partnership with the Indianapolis Marion County Public Libraries. On the second Saturday of each month for 2009, IN-Nell will provide a reader for an interactive bilingual story time celebrating languages and cultures of the world. Each month a different language, reflecting languages spoken in Indiana, will be featured. We started off in January with Russian and we had 42 people in attendance! Languages featured will be Chinese, French, Hindi, Hebrew, Portuguese, Italian, Japanese, Spanish, German, American Sign Language and Swahili.

The Library is supporting this with advertising featuring IN-NELL as the co-sponsor. We provide the readers and suggest ideas and activities to them to enhance the cultural experience.

Also, on March 7th, the annual spring IN-NELL conference, will feature nationally known speaker and author, Marcela Summerville. Her presentation will tie in with the focus this year on the use of stories and storytelling in the world language classroom.

The 6th annual TFLTA workshop for elementary/middle foreign language teachers will be Saturday, March 7th, 2009, from 9:00-3:30, in Nashville on the Belmont University campus in the Massey Boardroom.

The TFLTA Elementary/Middle workshop provides educators with a variety of tools for their world language programs including an overview of foreign language methodology and programs, ideas for hands-on activities, classroom-proven activities that promote student success along with current materials for foreign language instruction. There will also be ideas for maintaining/advocating a successful FL program, technology and applications of FL activities through the use of computers, time for sharing and networking with other foreign language teachers, an introduction to current practices in assessment and research, and a discussion of current topics that impact all foreign language teachers and classrooms.

All participants receive a workshop certificate of attendance will be available. The Swap Shop of activities will be immediately after lunch. Participants are being asked to please bring 40 copies of a favorite idea to share with everyone.

Please send in the registration form by February 28, 2009. Spread the word to other teachers and copy the registration form as needed. I am looking forward to seeing you March 7th. Questions? Please call Christina Amezquita at 615-554-5657 or email at christina.amezquita@mnps.org.
NNELL in Michigan met October 23, 2008 at the annual NNELL networking session at the Michigan World Language Association (MiWLA) conference in Lansing. Close to two dozen elementary and middle school language teachers from across the state attended the NNELL meeting. We discussed issues common to early language teachers such as staying in the target language, and dealing with traveling to multiple classrooms or even multiple schools. The networking session was also a swap shop. One teacher suggested using the popular sudoku puzzle to practice numbers. Another suggested using Picasso to review body parts, colors, and shapes. Many other great ideas floated around the room, and attendees went home with new connections and renewed enthusiasm.

NNELL state representative Stacy Witkowski led another session at the Michigan conference, titled “Tips and Tools for Elementary Foreign Language Programs.” It was very well attended, with more than fifty participants. The presentation gave an overview of the Spanish FLEX program initiated three years ago in the Lamphere school district in Madison Heights, Michigan, a suburb of Detroit. The session included information and resources useful to teachers and administrators who are new to elementary foreign language teaching, touching on subjects such as FLES vs FLEX, teaching from a cart, and age-appropriate vs. ability-appropriate materials.

“I was inspired to lead this session, my first, because at last year’s conference there were so few sessions aimed at elementary language teachers,” Witkowski said. It was the kind of session I would have wanted to attend myself. I hope that I am an example to rookies, and an inspiration to veterans: I want to attend YOUR session next year!”

Witkowski’s session was honored with MiWLA’s “Best Session of Michigan” award. It will be presented again on March 21 at the Central States Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages in Chicago under the new title “Elementary Foreign Language Program: Ready, Set, Go!”

Lingua Language Academy hosted a two day workshop for foreign language teachers in Dayton last fall. The workshop was conducted by Marcela Summerville and focused on teaching young children through thematic units. Participants learned techniques to stay in the target language, teach the required curriculum in context rather than strictly following chapters, and gained valuable insight into a whole language approach to teaching. Although the workshop was mostly geared towards 4 and 5 year olds, middle and high school teachers saw how music, movements, and stories could be incorporated to make for more memorable lessons and how to tie them to other subject areas.

An interesting story from the workshop is that was held at a church that had a preschool or Kindergarten session going on. I thought it would be the perfect opportunity to see all the theory we just learned applied and we "borrowed" the children to see Marcela’s techniques in action. For many participants this was the most valuable portion of the workshop. It was amazing to see the children’s engagement even though no English was spoken except for a few introductory words.

In part because of this event, another regional organization was formed by Jennifer Yuker (Kettering HS), Nick Stoller (Springboro HS) and myself: GERD: German Educational Resource Dayton. It consists of German teachers and professors from preschool level (Lingua Academy) to University level who meet every three weeks to discuss themes relevant to the teaching of German. The wide range of levels where educators teach gives everyone a unique perspective on the big picture that will ultimately benefit all our students. As far as I know, this is the only such organization in Dayton, just as German is the only language that there is an opportunity to be studied in our area from age 3 through 18 and beyond.

submitted by Susanne Jacobsen, Ohio
News from the Central States - West
Lindsey Cornwell
Central States West Regional Representative
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IOWA

West Des Moines FLES will be hosting an "Introduction to the SOPA" and a SOPA review in April. The Student Oral Proficiency Assessment is administered in the elementary program in order to evaluate student growth.

Dr. Marcia Rosenbusch, National K-12 Foreign Language Resource Center (Iowa State University), and Heather Southamimavong, West Des Moines Community Schools, both had articles published in the most recent Learning Languages Journal. Iowa’s language advocates continue to learn and lead in the area of professional development.

NEBRASKA
Kathy deBoer,
Nebraska State Representative
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The Nebraska International Languages Association (NILA) had its annual state conference at Doane College in Crete, NE on October 10 & 11. Language educators from all over the state gathered to share ideas related to the theme “Building Bridges through International Education”. Friday included immersion activities in Spanish, French and German. Saturday provided teachers the opportunity to gain valuable teaching ideas, classroom activities, advice and information about the best practices in language teaching. It was also an opportunity to honor those who have shown outstanding leadership in the field with awards at the annual luncheon. As in the past, it was a fun and rewarding time for all who attended.

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IOWA
Representative needed

KANSAS
Representative needed

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NEBRASKA
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NORTH DAKOTA
Representative needed

SOUTH DAKOTA
Representative needed

Registration is now open for the NNELL Summer Institute
Come spend time with Dr. Mimi Met and your NNELL friends!
for details, please go to www.nnell.org
In October 2008, the NNELL Minnesota Swapshop breakfast and networking was held at Eagan High School at the MCTLC annual fall conference. Kathy Olson-Studler and Lori Grant from St. Paul Academy presented a workshop entitled: “Best Practices in Early Second Language Learning.”

The University of Minnesota reports that there are now 50 immersion programs in the state of Minnesota.

Recently, MCTLC board members including the NNELL MN. rep-- wrote letters to state legislators urging them to advocate for adequate funding for state language programs in these challenging economic times. We felt it incumbent on us to make our perspectives about the importance of Pre-K-16 language and culture study known to legislators—even in these difficult economic times.
Greetings from Washington State! While I have been a member of NNELL for some time, I am new to the position of World Languages Program Supervisor at our state educational agency, so this is the first time we've had NNELL representation at the state level. While our state does not require any world language instruction at this time, there is growing interest in early language learning. A number of districts have started or will be starting in the next year immersion programs: full immersion in Spanish or Chinese; partial immersion in Spanish, Japanese, or Chinese; and two-way dual language programs in Spanish, primarily. There are also private schools offering French and German, and many schools offering afterschool language programs, as well as community-based programs. We also have a very innovative program for newborns to 7 year-olds called Sponge (www.sponge-school.com). Parents want the best for their kids!

One exciting development at the state level is the expectation that approximately 200 schools receiving state funding to offer full-day kindergarten should offer a “world language experience.” I have drafted a “Guide to Kindergarten World Language Experience” for these schools, with planning templates to help them get started. (It’s not easy to start a program when your school has been given the “mandate” with no funding or guidance.) My focus is on what they can reasonably do to develop curiosity about languages and cultures in the children and pave the way for future in-depth language learning opportunities. If anyone would like to review a draft of the guide and provide feedback, I’d be happy to share it. Contact me at michele.aoki@k12.wa.us.

This spring we will be piloting the NOELLA (National Online Early Language Learning Assessment) developed by our neighbors at CASLS in Oregon and offering a Rater Training and Scoring Conference by Avant Assessment. We already have a number of teachers trained to offer the ELLOPA (Early Language Listening and Oral Proficiency Assessment) and SOPA (Student Oral Proficiency Assessment) from the Center for Applied Linguistics. Our early language teachers have really valued learning about oral proficiency assessment and seeing how it transforms their teaching.
News from the Southwest

Marcela Gerber
Southwest Regional Representative
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In Colorado we are gearing up for the CCFLT conference that will be held in Denver from February 26-28th. Many of our elementary language colleagues will be presenting on a variety of topics including podcasting and cool technology for digital natives. NNELL members Kathy Durán and Leslie Davison will host a Roundtable session to network with K-8 educators.

There will also be an opportunity for anyone who is interested in finding out more about NNELL and networking with other Language educators in our state at an informal lunch on Saturday the 28th after the last morning session. We are excited to bring K-8 language teachers together in Colorado and provide them with networking tools and a new Wiki that will be set up to use at the conference and continuing through the school year and beyond.

Registration is still open for the Southwest Regional Professional Development Workshop

for details, please go to www.nnell.org
TEXAS

Marcela Gerber
Texas State Representative
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The school year started with a great fall Texas Foreign Language Association Conference in Houston. NNELL had a great session where participants learned not only about the mission of NNELL, but also took part in discussions on how best to spread awareness about NNELL.

For those teachers planning on attending the Spring TFLA Conference in Waco, TX on March 27-28, 2009, please make sure to visit both the NNELL booth and the NNELL presentation. Further information can be found at www.TFLA.info.

Since Maria Trevino retired from the Texas Education Agency as our State World Languages Coordinator, it has been hard to get news at a state level. I am hoping that an appointment will be made soon.

On March 2nd, the Hockaday School will be hosting a networking/mini workshop for teachers of Independent School in the Dallas-Ft Worth area. Please contact Marcela Gerber if you are interested in attending or interested in having information about the outcome of the workshop at mgerber@mail.hockaday.org

Unfortunately, numerous elementary world language programs in Texas have been cut back, some have been eliminated entirely, and others are slated to be eliminated during the coming school year. In midland, only one school still continues to offer world language programs to its elementary school students.

CALIFORNIA

Akiyo Hirose
California State Representative
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Finally, California is catching up with other states. We now have our World Language Standards that were approved in January 2009. We have Standards and Frameworks!

Our dream came true in our school district, San Francisco USD. For the last two years, we've been working on what we can offer so that our students can become global and multilingual citizens when they graduate from 12th grade. Our goal is to guarantee that all students will have access to a variety of high-quality articulated programs leading to different levels of mastery in two or more languages during our public school experience. We will implement FLES programs in as many elementary and middle schools as possible by 2020. This is in addition to existing programs such as immersion. We will build stronger high school programs in order to achieve high proficiency when they graduate. We will provide teacher training through coaching and professional development. SFUSD will help teachers develop curriculum and benchmarks aligned with California standards as well as with national standards.

At the CLTA annual conference, four FLES teachers from SFUSD will present thematic units based on legends and folktales in four languages – Spanish, Russian, Chinese and Japanese. We are lucky to have Terry Caccavale scheduled to make a presentation on Building Literacy Skills in the Content of Second Language at the pre-conference workshop.

We are planning to have more FLES workshops by inviting nationally known teachers and presenters in order to build strong networks among FLES teachers in California.

The National FLES Institute of Texas will be held once again at The Hockaday School in Dallas, Texas on June 29 - July 3, 2009.

Its mission is to provide teachers and administrators with the skills, knowledge and hands-on activities needed for successful FLES programs. Headlined by the likes of Marcela Matienzo Gerber, Dr. Patricia Davis-Wiley, Patti Lozano, and Agnès Starfield, this is an institute not to be missed. Over the past 15 years, over one thousand educators have attended!

For more information, please visit http://home.Hockaday.org/FLES
Important Dates

National Foreign Language Month                      March
SCOLT/FLAG/SEALLT, Atlanta, GA                      March 5-7
CSC/TFL, Chicago, IL                                March 19-21
NNELL Southwest Regional Workshop, Tucson, AZ      March 28
SWCOLT, Norman, OK                                  April 2-4
NECTFL, New York, NY                                April 16-18
NNELL Southeast Regional Workshop, Fairfax, VA      April 25
NNELL Award nomination due date                    June 1
NNELL Summer Institute, Ames, IA                   July 17-19

Attention State Representatives

The next deadline for news for the National Networking Newsletter is due to your Regional Representative on

April 6, 2009