

MIDDLE STATES ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS
COMMISSIONS ON ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

**AN INTRODUCTION TO THE
WORLD LANGUAGES
PROGRAM OF DISTINCTION**

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INTRODUCTION TO THE MIDDLE STATES PROGRAMS OF DISTINCTION

Middle States *Programs of Distinction* recognize outstanding individual programs within MSA accredited and candidate schools and school systems. MSA offers schools and school systems the opportunity to assess the following areas of their curricula for excellence against internationally recognized Standards and Indicators of Quality in each field.

21st Century Skills
Early Childhood Education
Global Literacies
Music
Service Learning
School Counseling
STEM
Visual Arts
World Languages

If a school/system's program demonstrates that it meets the expectations of the Standards and Indicators of Quality at a consistently high level and exhibits the characteristics essential to serving as a high quality exemplar program for other schools, the *Program of Distinction* will be awarded. The expectations for earning recognition as a MSA *Program of Distinction* are very high. As such, a small percentage of programs will be determined eligible to receive the **award**.

Alternatively, schools and school systems can use the MSA *Program of Distinction* process as a tool for **program evaluation** that will yield comprehensive feedback for growth and improvement of the chosen area.

For **award or program evaluation**, the school/system will complete a rigorous self-assessment that is presented in a self study report of the school/system's program. The self-study report is sent to MSA for review and if all is determined to be in order, a specialist visitor or visitors will be assigned to visit the school to validate the program's self assessment and offer feedback. For schools/systems applying for an **award**, the specialist visitor(s) will make a recommendation to award or defer recognition of the program as a MSA *Program of Distinction*. For schools/systems engaging in **program evaluation**, a detailed feedback report including recommendations and resources will be provided to the school/system.

The specialist visits can be scheduled either in conjunction with a Team Visit for accreditation or reaccreditation, or independently at any time during the accreditation period.

Schools and school systems that have engaged in the MSA *Program of Distinction* evaluation process either for the purpose of seeking an award or for conducting a program evaluation have benefitted greatly from the actual experience as well as the outcome of the process. We encourage you to consider either of these approaches for realizing recognition and growth and improvement of your school or school system.

After review of this document, if you are interested in receiving the application for this *Program of Distinction*, please contact your staff liaison/Associate Director or Audra Moyer, amoyer@cess-msa.org.

WHAT IS THE WORLD LANGUAGES PROGRAM OF DISTINCTION?

The World Languages Program of Distinction is one of a series of Programs of Distinction designed by the Middle States Association Commissions on Elementary and Secondary Schools (MSA-CESS) to recognize exemplary programs in various content and specialty areas. Following in the footsteps of the International Credential first developed in 2005, the World Languages Program of Distinction supports and promotes global education. In today's interconnected world, there is a clear need for students in all countries to develop the ability to view the world from the perspectives of others as well as to gain communication skills in more than one language. Proficiency in other languages and cultural agility are essential 21st century skills for successfully interacting with others socially, politically and in the work place.

The Middle States Association is fully aware of the challenges that schools/systems face in offering a continuum of study that develops "international literacies" and provides rich, meaningful cultural experiences. The World Languages Program of Distinction will publicly acknowledge the school/system's commitment to a proficiency based, culturally grounded sequence of language study of one or more languages, including the heritage language(s) of the school-community. The tangible evidence of this commitment will be an instructional program that dedicates the necessary time and intensity conducive to cultivating intermediate and advanced communicative proficiency in other languages. Additionally, the school/system will demonstrate that practical communication skills set within a real world context are the focus for instruction. To that end, the school/system's assessment program will mirror instructional practices and measure cultural competencies in addition to language skills. Ultimately, the school/system will show that intercultural awareness is integrated into educational and co-curricular programs to develop appreciation and respect for all cultures, as well as the skills and qualities essential to functioning in a global community.

The Program of Distinction has been reviewed and endorsed enthusiastically by a number of world languages educators practicing at all levels in the field, as well as by leaders of professional language organizations. The World Languages Program of Distinction has "set the bar high" in the interest of recognizing and promoting successful language learning throughout the world. Programs achieving the Program of Distinction will serve as exemplary models for others to emulate as well as attain highly deserved recognition in the form of external validation.

Middle States member schools with quality programs at the elementary, middle, and/or secondary school levels are invited to apply for the Program of Distinction. We encourage schools/systems to consider applying even if they believe they have not yet achieved the described criterion. The self study process and feedback from the Middle States visitors can

serve as a valuable program evaluation tool and effective guide toward attaining the Program of Distinction in the future.

THE WORLD LANGUAGES PROGRAM OF DISTINCTION CRITERION

The Criterion: *The school/system reflects a commitment to facilitating students' acquisition of languages and the understanding of and respect for other cultures. This commitment is demonstrated by the participation of a significant portion of the school/system's students in world languages courses and activities. Additionally, this commitment is accepted and understood by the governance, staff, parents, students, and broader educational community. The school/system shows its dedication to language education through a well articulated, learner appropriate program including options designed for native and heritage learners. Through the school/system's educational and co-curricular programs, students have the opportunity to learn second and additional languages for use in a range of contexts and for different purposes, and to understand the practices, perspectives and products of the cultures associated with the target language(s). Cultural agility is integrated into educational and co-curricular programs to develop appreciation and respect for all cultures, as well as the skills and qualities essential to functioning in a global community. Assessment practices focus on measuring the development of proficiency and cultural competencies over an extended sequence of language study.*

THE INDICATORS OF QUALITY

<i>Vision of the World Languages Program</i>	
WL.1	The school/system reflects a commitment to the development of language proficiency and acknowledges the importance of variables such as program model, duration, frequency and instructional practices to develop competency beyond novice levels.
WL.2	The school/system reveals an understanding of culture as the core of language teaching and the development of intercultural awareness as a means to increase international and cross-cultural tolerance and understanding.
WL.3	The school ensures that the value and benefits of the study of world languages are generally understood and accepted by the governance, staff, parents, and broader educational community.

<i>School Climate and Organization</i>	
WL.4	The school/system recruits and hires appropriately qualified teachers of world languages including native and heritage speakers. Language proficiency of world languages teachers is documented by nationally or internationally recognized rating systems. For example, a rating of Advanced-Low or higher on the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Proficiency Guidelines is considered the minimum level of proficiency necessary to conduct business in a language and is a standard for licensing in New Jersey.
WL.5	The school provides professional development opportunities that enable teachers of world languages to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to provide

	instruction that ensures the development of language proficiency and cultural competencies. Support for effective use of research-based instructional and assessment practices is provided to teachers.
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<i>Curriculum</i>	
WL.6	Attainable targets for student proficiency are established as the goals for the world languages program using standardized, nationally or internationally recognized rating systems. [e.g., ACTFL Performance Descriptors for Language Learners, Advanced Placement (AP), and International Baccalaureate (IB) assessments and Common European Framework Reference for Languages (CEFR)]
WL.7	Standards of excellence recognized by the profession provide the basis for determining the basic concepts, skills and knowledge required of all students to fulfill the stated goals of the world languages program.
WL.8	The curriculum addresses all key areas of internationally recognized standards for world languages. For example in the United States, the five key areas of the National Standards for Foreign Language Education are Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons and Communities. Additionally, the modes of communication outlined under the Communication Goal of the National Standards: interpretive, interpersonal and presentational, may serve as the structure for organizing instruction and assessment.
WL.9	The essential elements of culture, i.e., the products, practices and perspectives of the people who speak the target languages and the relationships among them, are imbedded throughout the curriculum.
WL.10	Interdisciplinary connections are included in the curriculum, thus furthering and reinforcing learning in other content areas. The target language becomes a vehicle for acquiring information and recognizing distinctive viewpoints.
WL.11	The selection of languages to be included in the program is based on the needs of the school's local community and interest. National priorities, e.g., the United States' focus on critical languages such as Mandarin and Arabic, are considered for expanded programs.
WL.12	The needs of native and heritage student populations in the school are addressed in program strands that meet their particular academic and linguistic needs.
WL.13	Multiple entry points in long sequence programs are available for students who wish to change languages or begin a third or fourth language.
WL.14	Best practices in language education, including development and support of literacy skills guide the selection of teaching strategies, learning activities, resources and assessment.
WL.15	The curriculum includes thematic units that feature authentic materials, i.e., materials produced by the native speaker for the native speaker that are learner-appropriate. The textbook serves as an additional resource for the course.
WL.16	Topics selected for units and themes are learner and language development

	appropriate and have application in real life.
WL.17	Current technologies are key components of the program that provide access to authentic materials as well as opportunities for real life communication and cooperative projects with students in other schools and countries.
WL.18	The curriculum is designed to promote active involvement of students in both the learning process and the assessment program, thus allowing them to take responsibility for their own language development.
WL.19	The development of the curriculum has established priorities, objectives, and goals for all courses and units within the program that are based on clearly defined expectations for all students. The curriculum is designed to ensure the alignment of teaching strategies, learning activities, instructional support, instructional resources, and assessment of learning.
WL.20	The program includes experiences that promote critical thinking, reasoning, problem solving, decision-making, and study skills.
WL.21	The learning expectations of the curriculum address the diverse learning needs of the students without compromising the common concepts, essential knowledge and skills students are expected to learn.
WL.22	The curriculum offers culminating courses that address a range of student abilities and interests including career-based options.
WL.23	The skills and knowledge of the curriculum are well-articulated and coordinated between all teachers at each grade/course level and by teachers across grade /course levels.
WL.24	Documented course guides or curriculum maps provide the basis for teacher implementation of best practices in instructional activities and assessment tasks.
WL.25	The curriculum, objectives, and expectations for learning are understood and supported by the school community stakeholders.
WL.26	The process used to develop the curriculum is designed to assure appropriate staff member, parental, and student input.
WL.27	Decisions made in the curriculum are based on data about student performance, knowledge about organizational development, and research about best practices in curriculum, instruction and assessment.
WL.28	Administrative leadership and support are provided in the coordination and articulation of the program.
WL.29	There is an ongoing process in place to evaluate the curriculum. The curriculum review process includes safeguards to ensure that the documented curriculum is up to date and taught. The review process focuses on what is to be deleted from the curriculum as well as what is to be added.
WL.30	The program is clearly defined, approved by the governing body, and is consistent with the philosophy, mission, beliefs, and/or objectives of the school/system.

<i>Instruction</i>	
WL.31	Instruction is guided by knowledge of second language acquisition theory. World languages teachers are skilled in providing input and employing strategies to promote student output, which includes multiple opportunities for meaningful interactions.
WL.32	The target language is used almost exclusively in class and is supported by visual and kinesthetic cues to ensure that teacher input is comprehensible to students.
WL.33	Student use of the target language is emphasized as developmentally appropriate and supported by learner-centered strategies including the use of scaffolding.
WL.34	The scope and pacing of lessons engage student interest and provide learning opportunities that challenge but do not tax students' abilities. The affective filter is appropriately low in world languages classrooms.
WL.35	Risk taking in language learning is promoted by the teacher. Correction is achieved indirectly through modeling as well as by direct means.
WL.36	Instructional strategies are selected to integrate the learning of culture with the language content. Products and practices are related to the perspectives of the cultures.
WL.37	Class sizes in world languages classes promote and allow for the development of proficiency in communication.
WL.38	Learner-appropriate materials are selected and/or developed.
WL.39	Technology is available to enhance teaching and learning and is used to advantage in order to capture student interest and facilitate student learning preferences.
WL.40	Teachers employ strategies that motivate all students; individual needs are addressed through differentiation, flexible grouping, and additional assistance when needed.
WL.41	Students and teachers demonstrate an understanding of cultural differences by maintaining respect for each other in class.
WL.42	Teachers maintain safe, positive and supportive classroom environments.
WL.43	Information on student progress is used to improve teaching and student learning.

<i>Assessment of Student Learning</i>	
WL.44	Multiple measures featuring assessment tasks set in real life contexts are used to assess student performance in communicating. Assessments mirror communicative instructional tasks as well as evaluate student knowledge and application of structures and vocabulary.
WL.45	ACTFL or other proficiency rating scale(s) such as CEFR guidelines are used to assess student performance of determined criterion, e.g., vocabulary use, language control, comprehension, comprehensibility, cultural awareness, communication strategies, text type, language function and audience impact. National exam criteria are included for native and heritage populations.
WL.46	Standards-based assessment models are adopted and administered, e.g., ACTFL Integrated Performance Assessment (IPA), Modified Oral Proficiency Interview

	(MOPI –for secondary language learners), Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) Student Oral Proficiency Assessment (SOPA – for young language learners), and online assessments, such as ACTFL Assessment of Performance Toward Proficiency in Languages (AAPL) and the CASLS (University of Oregon) STAMP Test, to benchmark individual and/or cohort achievement along the continuum of proficiency. National exams are available for native and heritage populations.
WL.47	Assessment is ongoing. Students are assessed informally and formally on their attainment of lesson, unit, course, and program goals.
WL.48	Teachers review collaboratively and discuss evidence of student learning to develop clearer understanding of the quality and rating of student work. This information is used to improve teaching and learning.
WL.49	Common assessments are administered at the end of units, quarters, semesters, and/or school year to obtain evidence of student progress throughout the levels and courses of the program.
WL.50	Students are informed in advance of expected criteria and given samples or models typical of targeted levels of performance. Students may participate in the identification of criteria and building of rubrics.
WL.51	Student self and peer assessments are included as appropriate.
WL.52	Feedback of results to students is timely, meaningful and for the purpose of improving future performance.

<i>Resources</i>	
WL.53	The school shows its commitment to world languages education through the dedication of resources (financial, human, physical, time, etc.) that promote language acquisition and cultural understanding.
WL.54	The school partners with universities and various institutions to augment program offerings, obtain resources, and provide staff and students unique opportunities for teaching and learning languages and culture. For example, partnerships with universities may include pre-service training programs and inquiry projects while opportunities for grants and fellowships may come from government agencies and foreign embassies.

<i>Student Life and Student Activities</i>	
WL.55	The culture of the school demonstrates respect for cultural and religious differences in the backgrounds of students and staff.
WL.56	The school takes into account the cultural and religious diversity of the student population when planning and implementing its school calendar and its student activities program.
WL.57	The school takes advantage of local resources and culture to educate its students. For those schools in non-English speaking areas, the world languages curriculum provides opportunities for education and immersion in the local language.

WL.58	Opportunities for international travel, international experiences, and student exchange programs exist, allowing students to experience other cultures firsthand.
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APPLYING FOR THE PROGRAM OF DISTINCTION

QUALIFICATIONS

The following qualifications must be met in order for a School/System to apply for the Program of Distinction:

- The School/System must be accredited by MSA-CESS or be a candidate for accreditation by MSA-CESS.
- If applying for the Program of Distinction independent of a current self-study and accreditation/reaccreditation process, the School/System must:
 - Demonstrate that it meets all of the appropriate Standards for Accreditation at the time of its last evaluation and/or
 - Provide evidence that it has addressed successfully all areas of the Standards identified for improvement through Stipulation or Accreditation Maintenance Reports.
- If applying for the Program of Distinction as a part of a current self-study and accreditation process in preparation for a Team Visit, the School/System will integrate the Program of Distinction application as an additional component of the self-study and Team Visit.

GUIDELINES

The following guidelines are offered to Schools/Systems wishing to apply for the Program of Distinction:

Schools/systems:

- Must be a candidate or accredited member in good standing of MSA-CESS or an Alliance partner.
- Must be willing to accept an on-site Team Visit to validate the Program of Distinction application. If the School/System is seeking the Program of Distinction as a part of a Team Visit or Mid-Term Review, the School/System must be willing to accept at least one additional team member to focus on the Program of Distinction Application.
- Must give MSA-CESS notice of its intention to apply for the Program of Distinction at least six months prior to the date of the expected evaluation visit.
- Must meet all of the appropriate Standards for Accreditation in order to be awarded the Program of Distinction. Schools/Systems that are “Accredited with Stipulations” are eligible for the Program of Distinction.
- May seek the Program of Distinction at any time.
- May seek the Program of Distinction as a program evaluation for an additional fee.

If a Schools/System is receiving a Program of Distinction Visitor as a part of a Team Visit, the Program of Distinction Visitor will integrate his/her activities into the three and one-half-day schedule of the Team Visit. If a School/System is receiving a Program of Distinction Visitor as a part of a Mid-Term Review or independent of any other accreditation activities, the Program of Distinction Visitor(s) will develop a separate schedule of meetings specifically targeted on validation of the findings in the School's/System's Application for the Program of Distinction. This may require an additional day extension to the typical one-day Mid-Term Review.

The decisions that the Visitor will recommend are either to award the Program of Distinction or to deny awarding the Program of Distinction. When the awarding of the Program of Distinction is denied, schools/systems may reapply at a later date by submitting a new Application for the Program of Distinction.

The term/length of time for the award of the Program of Distinction will be made to coincide with the School/System's term of accreditation. When the Program of Distinction has been awarded, it is expected that renewal of the Program of Distinction, if desired, will be tied to the renewal of the School/System's accreditation.

ACTIVITY	DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION
Submission of the Program of Distinction Commitment Form	At least six months prior to the intended date of visit
Submission of the completed Application for the Program of Distinction	At least two months prior to the date of the intended visit

*Schools/Systems may also complete the application for the purpose of a program evaluation and not for seeking the Program of Distinction. Full details will follow in a separate section.

STEPS TO EARNING AND MAINTAINING THE PROGRAM OF DISTINCTION

- 1) The School/System completes the Program of Distinction application, either as a part of its current self-study process or separately as a "stand-alone" application.
- 2) The School/System submits the Program of Distinction Commitment Form.
- 3) The School/System submits the Application for the Program of Distinction to MSA-CESS along with payment.
- 4) The staff coordinator for the Program of Distinction evaluates the Application to determine how well it meets the Criterion and Indicators of Quality and the school/system's readiness to host the Visitor. The staff coordinator will provide feedback to the school/system and a recommendation regarding whether or not a Visitor should be appointed at this time.

- 5) The Visitor(s) appointed by MSA to evaluate the School/System's application have substantial educational, and/or administrative experience. The number of visitors will vary depending upon the comprehensiveness of the School/System's initiatives in the Program of Distinction area, the size of School/System, etc.
- 6) Upon the completion of the visit, the Visitor submits the Report and a recommendation for award or denial of the Program of Distinction. Upon the receipt of the Visitor's report, the staff Coordinator develops an analysis of the Visitor's report and makes a staff recommendation on the award of the Program of Distinction.
- 7) An MSA Accreditation Advisory Committee reviews the Visitor's report and the School/System's application and determines its recommendation on the award of the Program of Distinction. The Middle States Commissions' Membership and Accreditation Committees review the recommendations of staff and the accreditation advisory committee and make a recommendation to the full Commissions.
- 8) The Commissions make a final decision on the award of the Program of Distinction. MSA determines the term of the Program of Distinction, which will generally coincide with the school's/system's normal accreditation term.
- 9) The school/system ensures that all future accreditation maintenance activities (e.g. Periodic Reviews, Mid-Term Reviews Visits, etc.) will examine progress on recommendations outlined in the school/system's Program of Distinction application and the Visitor's report.

The Middle States Commissions on Elementary and Secondary Schools meet twice a year (typically in April and October) to make accreditation decisions. It is at that time that decisions regarding the award of the Program of Distinction will be made although; the School/System will be informed of the recommendation of the Visitor prior to their departure.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Our school/system does not have a diverse population of languages and cultures. Is this required?

While a certain amount of diversity within an institution may make a school/system a stronger candidate for the World Languages Program of Distinction, this is by no means a requirement. As long as the institution embraces and enacts the vision for proficiency and cultural agility that is reflected in the World Languages Program of Distinction Criterion and Indicators, then it is eligible for the Program of Distinction.

Does an overseas school/system with a world languages program qualify more easily for this Program of Distinction? Isn't its geographical location a favorable advantage?

While a number of overseas schools may be able to qualify for the Program of Distinction, it is not automatically conferred. MSA believes strongly that any institution deserving of the

Program of Distinction should first conduct an evaluation of the Criterion and Indicators that commonly define the MSA World Languages Program of Distinction. Part of the value in seeking the Program of Distinction is the assurance it provides to the world community that the institution is examining its world languages program to identify its strengths and areas for improvement. Equally important is that the findings of the self examination have been validated by external reviewers. Finally, a key aspect of the application process is to identify action steps for future improvement. An “automatic qualification” would not ensure that this occurs.

Our world languages program does not have a formal or standardized assessment program. How can we show trends in student performance?

While it is of primary importance to have a picture of student performance against recognized world languages standards, particularly in the area of communicative proficiency, the program may be able to document student results in other ways. For example, midterm and/or final exams that assess speaking, comprehension, writing and provide opportunities for students to demonstrate cultural understanding could be valid measures of a high school standards-based program. A simple, elementary grade level assessment administered for the purpose of ascertaining the attainment of unit or program objectives could also serve as a measure of the development of proficiency. Alternatively, an elementary report card with a developmental approach might indicate the competencies the children have attained in their world languages. A middle school’s semester “hands on” project, targeting a culmination of vocabulary and structures, might also provide sufficient evidence that certain levels of communicative and cultural competence have been reached. In all three of these examples, it would be important to know the criteria that determined whether students met, exceeded or did not meet expectations of the course, grade level or program. It would also be important for the assessments to be “common” for the course, grade, or proficiency level. *Lingua-folio*, a portfolio model developed in Europe or e-portfolios could also be used to track and document student progress in the attainment of proficiency and cultural agility over time.

Do all curriculum documents in the program have to be up to date?

Ideally, curriculum guides and/or maps should be the “guide” for current best practices in world languages and therefore should be updated, revised, or rewritten in a timely manner. However, curriculum review cycles do not always allow for every guide in a program to be perfectly updated. Curriculum mapping presents another set of challenges for teachers in documenting current scope and sequences, instructional strategies and assessment practices. In this case, three factors will determine eligibility for the World Languages Program of Distinction:

1. There is ample evidence that current guides reflect the communicative focus of the program and the appropriate emphasis on culture.

2. A plan for how the guides will be revised or rewritten and a scheduled review cycle are in place. Guidelines and expectations for updating curriculum maps are in place.
3. There is ample evidence in instructional and assessment practices that proficiency and cultural agility are the focal points of the program.

Do all teachers in the program have to be “master teachers” in proficiency-based methodologies?

As teacher turn over to some degree is a natural process for all schools, and a particular area of concern for many, it is understood that not all teachers in a school’s program will have the same skill sets in proficiency-based instructional practices. However, a knowledge base of language acquisition theory should guide the program. It would be expected that a core of “teacher-leaders” will demonstrate the standards to which the world languages program aspires. It is also expected that the mentoring of new teachers and professional development for all world languages teachers are systematic, and consistent with program expectations and goals.

USING THE APPLICATION FOR A PROGRAM EVALUATION

The following guidelines are offered to schools wishing to use the Program of Distinction **ONLY** as a Program Evaluation tool:

- Schools/Systems may seek the Program of Distinction as a program evaluation tool at any time.
- Schools/Systems seeking to use the Program of Distinction as a formal program evaluation tool must be willing to accept an onsite visit to validate the findings of the self-study. If the school/system is seeking the program evaluation as a part of a Team Visit or Mid-Term Review, the school/system must be willing to accept at least one additional team member to focus on the components of the program.
- If a school is receiving a Visitor as a part of a team visit, the Visitor will integrate his/her activities into the 3 and ½ day schedule of the team. If a school is receiving a Visitor as a part of a Mid-Term Review or independent of any other accreditation activities, the Visitor will develop a separate schedule of meetings specifically targeted on validation of the findings in the school’s self-study of the program. This may require an additional day extension to the typical one-day Mid-Term Review.
- Schools must give MSA-CESS notice of its intention to apply for the Program Evaluation at least six months prior to the date of the expected evaluation visit.
- Schools seeking a Program Evaluation independent of any other MSA-CESS accreditation activities will adhere to the following timelines:

ACTIVITY	DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION
Submission of the Program of Distinction as Program Evaluation Commitment Form	At least six months prior to the intended date of visit
Submission of the completed Application for the Program of Distinction as Program Evaluation	At least two months prior to the date of the intended visit

PREPARING FOR AND HOSTING THE VISITOR(S)

When the school/system's application has been received and reviewed by the Middle States staff, a visitor(s) will be assigned, and the length of the visit will be determined based upon the size and scope of the school/system's World Languages Program and the type of visit. The visit may be arranged as a "stand alone" or in conjunction with a regularly scheduled accreditation visit. The Visitor(s) will contact the school/system to arrange the details. The purpose of the visit will be to validate the school/system's application, ascertain the quality of the program vis à vis the Criterion and Indicators of Quality, and present a formal report of the findings to the school/system and to Middle States Association. (Note: The formal report of the findings for a program evaluation will be presented to the school only). A schedule will be developed by the Visitor(s) and World Languages Program liaison that will include interviews, classroom observations, and review of materials and documents.

INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUPS

The World Languages Program of Distinction or Evaluation Visitor(s) will more than likely want to meet with the following individuals and groups:

- Board Member(s)
- Superintendent of Schools
- Director of Curriculum
- The Head(s) of School
- The Head(s) of the World Languages Program
- World Languages Steering Committee
- World Languages Staff
- Guidance Counselors
- Technology Staff
- Students
- Parents
- Community members, representatives from partnerships, consultants and other stakeholders as appropriate

CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS

Observations should be arranged so that the Visitor(s) see as many of the program's levels and languages as possible in the time allotted. If a system is applying, all schools in the system will be visited.

MATERIALS AND DOCUMENTS FOR REVIEW

It is recommended that the school/system have available a variety of evidence in support of its self assessment and application for the World Languages Program of Distinction. Online documents and electronic versions including external drives and video streaming are welcome. The suggestions below offer a wide range of evidence that the school/system could provide for the Visitor(s)' review during the visit:

- World languages curriculum guides and/or course outlines; access to online curriculum maps
- Program of Study (course offerings and descriptions)
- Sample units and/or lesson plans if not included in curriculum guides
- Samples of authentic instructional/ assessment materials
- Assessment tools
- Student performance results and samples (should include recorded samples of speaking proficiency and cultural agility)
- Documentation of partnerships, e.g., university collaborations, "sister school" relationships, "key pals", international education projects, and community connections to speakers of other languages
- Documentation of field trips and extended travel opportunities the institution offers to enhance learning of languages and cultures
- Documentation of co-curricular activities and events that celebrate and promote language learning and cultural understanding
- Documentation of the communication of the goals, value and benefits of world languages study within the institution, to parents and to the community
- Policies that show how the institution promotes language learning and cultural understanding, e.g., world languages requirement for graduation or required course of designated cultural studies relevant to school community
- Budget demonstrating resource allocations to the World Languages Program
- Goals of the program and any short and/or long range plans that have been developed or are currently being developed to attain them
- Documentation of recognition, grants and/or scholarships the program, staff and/or students have been awarded in world languages
- Documentation of adjudication results, e.g., performance in poetry contests, debates, drama and writing competitions

FEEDBACK FROM THE VISITORS

At the conclusion of the visit, the Visitor(s) will meet with the Head of School/System and Head of the World Languages Program or other key personnel as appropriate to offer feedback on the interviews, classroom observations, and review of materials and documents. A report of the visit observations and findings will be forwarded to the Head of School/System within four weeks. If the school/system is seeking the World Languages Program of Distinction and has been recommended for it, the Program of Distinction will be officially conferred after review of the report and approval of the recommendation by the accreditation advisory committee and the MSA Commissions on Elementary and Secondary Schools.