# 2020 Professional Learning Needs Assessment Survey for World Languages Educators Executive Summary

On January 22, 2020, the California Department of Education (CDE) launched the first needs assessment specifically addressing the professional learning priorities of world languages (WL) educators. The online survey was accessible to the field through

March 6, 2020. Within that time, 867 completed surveys were submitted. This report summarizes the data from the completed surveys.

## Survey Respondents: Where Respondents Work and the Jobs They Do

Ninety percent of survey respondents work at school sites. Classroom teachers comprised 87 percent of respondents. Thirteen percent of respondents in total (112), were grouped together as serving in administrative roles including administrators, program specialists, teachers on special assignment (TOSAs), and program leads or coordinators.

## Administrators: Years of Experience

Close to equal numbers of respondents self-identify as either new administrators with two or fewer years of experience (29) or veteran administrators with more than 10 years of experience (27), and a slightly larger group (31) stated they had 3–5 years of experience. The smallest number of respondents (11) affirmed 6–10 years of experience.

## Administrators: Languages Taught, Language Program Types, Grade Levels, Plans for Expansion

Administrators’ responses indicate, as expected, that Spanish, cited by 97 administrators, is taught in a far greater number of programs than any other world language. In order of their prevalence, the 10 most commonly taught languages, according to our survey respondents, are:

1. Spanish (97)
2. French (33)
3. Chinese (Mandarin) (24)
4. German (15)
5. American Sign Language (ASL) (15)
6. Korean (11)
7. Italian (8)
8. Latin (7)
9. Arabic (6)
10. Japanese (6)

When asked about plans to offer additional languages within their programs, 43 percent of respondents indicated that they had no plans to add any WL to their current offerings.

Administrators also provided information about the different types of programs offered at their school sites. The largest percentage of administrators responding to this question (45 percent) reported that they operated traditional four-year high school WL programs.

When asked about possible expansion of their WL programs, almost half of respondents (47 percent) indicated that they had no plans to expand their offerings within the next two years. Immersion programs were the most frequently cited program type (20 percent) among administrators who do plan to add to their programs.

## Teachers: Experience

Responses to this question highlight the fact that we have a veteran workforce instructing our WL students. Of the 755 responses received, 472 (75 percent) reported having over 10 years of classroom teaching experience. Fifty-five (7 percent) identified as new teachers with experience of two years or less.

## Teachers: Languages and Program Types

The top five languages taught, according to teachers’ responses, are Spanish, French, Mandarin Chinese, American Sign Language (ASL) and German. An additional 39 languages were cited

When asked to identify the type(s) of language program(s) in which they teach, 91 percent of respondents named one of five program types. The greatest number of teachers responding to the survey (45 percent) cited a traditional four-year high school sequence as the type of program in which they taught. In descending order, the other most frequently identified program types were Advanced Placement Programs, Heritage Speaker Programs, Immersion Programs, and International Baccalaureate Programs.

**Conclusion**

The *WL Standards* provide the infrastructure to update language teaching strategies and to welcome all students to the WL classroom. The *WL Framework* provides deeper explanation, examples, and explicit guidance for the evidence-based methodologies that fully implement the *WL Standards* in WL instruction. It also incorporates the policies and practices critical to access and equity for all student groups across all content areas.

Analysis of the robust response of the WL education community to the survey will assist the CDE, working with its internal and external partners, to identify significant

opportunities to support the effectiveness of California’s existing WL programs, as well as to guide their expansion.

Recommendations made on the basis of the data in this report will take shape as California educators analyze, reflect, plan, and collaborate. Actions resulting from those recommendations will ensure the generation and continuous improvement of WL programs that leverage the assets of diversity, lived experience, and language skills of California students, and enable them to attain the linguistic and cultural competence so necessary to their leadership as global citizens.

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