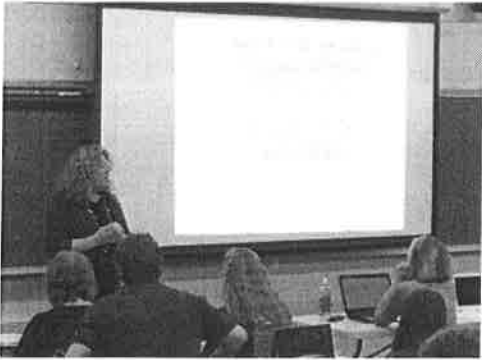


Consortium Developing Checkpoint A and B Exams

By Sarah Cioffi, Supervisor of World Languages at Bethlehem CSD



On October 23, nearly 50 teachers from 15 area school districts met at Bethlehem Central High School to begin writing test items for this year's New York Capital Area Language (NY-CAL) Consortium Exams. The NY-CAL Consortium was launched last year, in an effort to meet a need in New York State schools for common Comprehensive Checkpoint A and B exams in French, German, and Spanish. This year, the consortium added Latin to the list of assessments to be created. Area districts represented at the workshop included Bethlehem, Shenendehowa, Burnt Hills-Ballston Lake, South Colonie, Scotia-Glenville, Waterford-Halfmoon, Averill Park, Cairo-Durham, New Lebanon, Schoharie, Warrensburg, Schuylerville, Amsterdam, Corinth, and Chatham.

The first half of the day was spent discussing the timetable for the creation of this year's exams, explaining the process for submitting questions, and training participants on writing appropriate exam questions. Participants spent the afternoon collaborating in small groups, writing test items in the various target languages. "The turnout for this year's workshop was much higher than we anticipated, not including several schools who have joined the consortium but were unable to attend. This indicates to us that school districts are interested in a common assessment that matches the rigor and reputation of the Regents Exam," said Sarah Cioffi, Supervisor of World Languages at Bethlehem CSD. "The fact that this exam is created by experienced teachers, who are experts in their content areas, means that we are able to provide an excellent product to participating districts."

Each test item goes through a rigorous editing process, which includes sub-committees of language teachers and supervisors, and review by native speakers. The exams' questions are kept secure until June, when they are distributed to administrators in participating districts. The format of the exams mirrors that of the former Comprehensive Regents Exams in format and point values, and includes speaking, listening, reading, and writing components. This year, the NY-CAL Consortium plans to gather data from participating schools, including an item analysis of test questions, in order to inform the creation of the assessments moving forward.

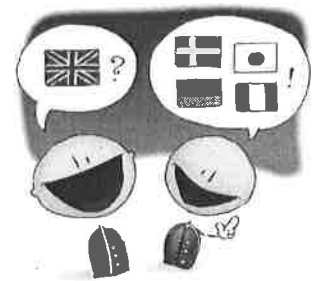
In order to use the NY-CAL exam, participating districts must submit a minimum number of questions for the listening and reading portions of the exams, on topics pre-determined by NY-CAL organizers. Otherwise, there is no cost to districts to use the exam. Membership is open to all New York State schools, and it is not too late to join for this school year. If you would like more information about joining the NY-CAL Consortium, please contact Sarah Cioffi, Supervisor of World Languages and ENL at Bethlehem Central School District (scioffi@bcasd.neric.org), or Rachel Stead, Academic Administrator for LOTE, ENL, and Grants at Shenendehowa Central School District (SteaRach@shenet.org).

World Languages—Frequently Asked Questions

The following were some frequently asked World Language questions that OBEWL received in September:

Can a student take a foreign language class outside of the district and receive credit for independent study towards a Regents diploma or Regents diploma with Advanced Designation?

No. Credit for independent study may be awarded for elective courses only, and shall not be awarded for courses required for the Regents diploma. The district/school deciding whether or not to accept a language class for elective credit should take into account the number of weekly hours of instruction, the rigor of the program, and alignment to NYS checkpoint A and B standards



If a 9th grade student skips a first year of LOTE because s/he speaks a language other than English at home, how many more units of LOTE must the student take to receive the Regents with Advanced Designation?

Regardless of where a student is placed in his/her first year of LOTE instruction, in order to receive the Regents with Advanced Designation, the student would still need to successfully complete a total of three units of study and pass a locally developed Checkpoint B exam.

If a student earns 3-5 LOTE credits for education and residence in an other than English-speaking environment, does s/he have to take a locally developed LOTE exam?

No, not if the credit is towards a Regents Diploma, (Checkpoint A);

Yes, if the credit is towards Regents Diploma with Advanced Designation, (Checkpoint B).