

The *North Carolina Basic Education Program* (BEP), along with the federal *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* reauthorizations, such as the 2002 No Child Left Behind legislation, present world languages as a core subject that every student should learn as part of a balanced curriculum. Internationally, most countries require all of their students to study one or more world languages. This premise is also reflected in the guiding mission of the North Carolina State Board of Education (SBE) in that every public school student will graduate from high school, globally competitive for work and postsecondary education and prepared for life in the 21st Century. The first goal states that North Carolina public schools will produce globally competitive students in which “every student excels in rigorous and relevant core curriculum that reflects what students need to know and demonstrate in a global 21st Century environment, including **a mastery of languages**, an appreciation of the arts, and competencies in the use of technology. The SBE [Future-Ready Students for the 21st Century](#) goals also include 17 skills and characteristics for the Future-Ready graduate that are necessary for success, including the following that are developed in the study of world languages:

- Multilingual
- Knowledgeable Global Citizen

Acquiring or learning another language will build those skills, and, as a student builds proficiency in a language, other Future-Ready skills and characteristics are also practiced and refined:

- Effective Communicator
- Proficient Reader
- Literate Consumer of Media
- Creative/Innovative and Critical Thinker
- Curious Researcher
- Strong Team Contributor
- Relationship Builder

The ability to communicate with others is central to human nature. Throughout the ages, humans have been able to share information, interests, needs, and values over time and space and, thus, have influenced others by their actions and their words. In recent years, technology tools have brought the world closer and have erased many of the existing borders. As boundaries between countries are dissolving, the need for learning world languages has become a necessary component for linking with the rest of the world and for producing an enlightened citizenship able to function in today's global marketplace.
