

## Talking Points

### International Education Summit May 2, 2006

- Today, we are all aware of the interconnectedness of the world's people. What happens in the farthest corner of the world now touches us almost instantly.
- Yet until recently, this global interdependence has been a neglected aspect of education reform.
- Our education system has not kept pace with the rapid changes taking place in the world.
- And we are going to pay a political and economic price when we do not understand and cannot communicate with our global neighbors.
- In addition to strong mathematical and technical backgrounds--our young people need to be skilled in the dynamics of a global economy and social systems and have knowledge of world cultures and languages--all necessary to secure jobs that might require doing business with people from very different countries.
- So we're here today to invest in Virginia's future.
- And it is up to us to prepare our students to:
  - participate in an economy that reaches beyond the commonwealth,
  - understand international events that impact their daily lives,
  - develop a greater understanding of global issues, and
  - appreciate, better, the diverse cultures in Virginia's classrooms, communities and workplaces.

You are a select audience.

- You have been invited to attend this **International Education Summit: Virginia in 2015** because of your specialized abilities.
- We are asking you to help integrate international education into the high school redesign initiative.
- By the end of today--

-- we are asking you to make suggestions on how to develop international perspectives within disciplines such as reading, history and social sciences, mathematics, science, music, art and foreign languages.

--we are asking you to consider ways to provide professional development for our teachers and administrators so that they, too, will develop a broader context for understanding international perspectives.

--and, we are asking you to suggest ways to have our businesses and communities work together with our schools ... to ... stimulate the fundamental change in attitudes that we need to develop those international perspectives.

- Today we are trying to prepare our state for the global age.
- Your job is to recommend steps that this state can take to ensure that high school graduates will have the international knowledge and skills needed in 2015.
- Joining us in these endeavors is the Asia Society, an international organization dedicated to strengthening relationships among the peoples of Asia and the United States.
- With a generous grant from the Asia Society, the Virginia Department of Education is able to host this summit today.
- The department was also able to conduct an international education survey in our school divisions, and I'll share some of those findings shortly.
- Finally the Asia Society grant also allowed us to establish a **Task Force on International Education** .
- Many of those members are here today. (STAND)
- This task force has met twice to explore ways to integrate international education into the high school redesign initiative.
- Today its members will listen to your recommendations and use your suggestions to help create a plan of action to strengthen teaching strategies, language learning, and cultural understanding in our educational system.
- But, Where is Virginia Now?
- As you know, we do have an educational system that contains exemplary international programs and activities already in existence.
- For example--

--the Advanced Placement (AP) Virtual High School teaches AP courses in Spanish, Latin, history, government, geography, and economics.

--the Virginia Satellite Education Network (V-SEN teaches Latin I-III and Japanese I-III, and will add a pilot Chinese program in the fall.

--we have the Governor's Summer Residential Foreign Language Academies in French, German, Japanese, Latin, Russian, and Spanish.

--Students may participate in the International Space Olympics held in Korolev, Russia, each October.

--Thirty-five (35) public schools take part in the International Baccalaureate Program.

--And according to the Virginia Department of Education's August 2005, International Education Survey, approximately 70% of our school divisions offer students the choice of three or more languages.

--In fact, 17% of our school divisions offer five or more languages.

- According to the department's survey (and you have some of the results in a handout in your folders) some examples of internationally related school activities or programs that are occurring in our schools today are:

--Sister city/school partnerships,

--the Visiting International Faculty Program that is in about 35 school divisions,

--Fulbright teacher exchanges,

--Spring or summer student travel -- reported in at least 15 school divisions,

--Special summer programs, and

--International Baccalaureate programs

- In fact, 42 of the 132 school divisions reported that they have some sort of student exchange programs.
- As already noted, globalization trends are going to continue.
- We must give greater priority to preparing our students to grow and benefit from this trend. Please help us with this challenge.