

Governor's Weekly Message Transcript: Preparing Youth for the Global Economy

In our global economy, we can greatly expand opportunities available to our kids if we recognize the advantages of speaking multiple languages. So two years ago we launched a world language immersion program in which students can take half of their subjects in Chinese or Spanish – starting in kindergarten. The response has been phenomenal. More than 800 of our youngest students can talk about their school day in more than one language. By next year more than 1500 will be able to do so.

Nearly all of the students' parents have agreed that our seven Spanish and three Chinese programs enrich their child's education. As one Spanish immersion teacher said: It's amazing to see 5-year-olds arrive in kindergarten unable to write their name, and by the end of the year have a conversation in two different languages. By 4th grade, students will be proficient. By 9th grade, they'll be able to pass an Advanced Placement language class. And they'll succeed because of great educators. We're working with our colleges to train more language teachers, while building relationships with China and Spain.

I was proud to welcome Spain's United States Ambassador to McIlvaine Early Childhood Center where we renewed a partnership that has brought dozens of Spain's best teachers to our schools and that has allowed us to send Delaware teachers to training programs in Spain. Ambassador Gil-Casares emphasized that hundreds of Spanish companies invest in the United States. And you cannot overestimate the importance of languages in determining where they will create jobs. By

giving students the chance to start language training early, we'll help them make the most of their talents, and we'll keep Delaware moving forward.