

Rep. Johnson offered the following resolution:

House Resolution No. 153.

A resolution to encourage Michigan schools to offer foreign language classes in elementary school.

Whereas, Aided by 21st century technology and media, the international business and social world is getting smaller every day. There is an increasing demand for multilingual workers, not only in the corporate world, but also for jobs as mechanics, social workers, and medical professionals. Michigan needs more foreign language speakers to be competitive in a global economy; and

Whereas, Compared with adults or even teenagers, the brains of young children are more able to absorb the complexities of a second language. Learning a second language at a young age improves achievement in other academic areas, as well as increasing cognitive ability in general. It enhances thinking processes such as listening ability, memory, creativity, and critical thinking. Studies have shown that students with more years of foreign language study score higher on math and verbal SAT tests; and

Whereas, Young foreign language learners gain insight into their own language and culture, begin to look beyond their customary borders, and develop an early understanding of relationships among different cultures and languages. All students can benefit from foreign language study regardless of academic goals, ethnic background, socioeconomic status, or learning style; and

Whereas, According to the U.S. Department of Education, more than 200 million children in China are studying English in primary school, but only 24,000 students in U.S. schools are learning Chinese. Learning a second or even a third foreign language is compulsory for students in China, the European Union, Thailand, and many other countries. It is important to provide an uninterrupted sequence of foreign language study in grades K-12 to gain the level of proficiency needed to communicate with people around the world in other languages; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives, That we encourage Michigan schools to offer foreign language classes in elementary school; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the Michigan State Board of Education and the Michigan Superintendent of Public Instruction.