World Language Requirements:
Statute

State Statute 121.02(1)(L)(5) requires school districts to “provide regular instruction in foreign language in grades 7 and 8 beginning in the 1996-97 school year.” State Statute 121.02(1)(L)3 requires schools to “provide access to an educational program that allows pupils each year to study foreign language” in grades 9-12.

Administrative Code PI 8.01(2)(L)4 provides information about what regular instruction is: “In grades 7 and 8, provide regular instruction in foreign language beginning in the 1994-95 school year. In this subdivision, regular instruction in foreign language means access to instruction in sufficient frequency and length to achieve the objectives and time allocations of a written, sequential curriculum plan in foreign language. The foreign language curriculum shall follow the requirements of other curriculum documents required under par. (k).”

PI 8.001 Definitions defines access: “‘Access’” means an opportunity to study through school district course offerings, independent study, cooperative educational service agencies, or cooperative arrangements between school district boards under s. 66.0301, Stats., and postsecondary education institutions.”

2013 Wisconsin ACT 138, amendment to 118.33 (1) (a), allows school districts to award high school credit for middle school foreign language learning, if conditions required of ACT 138 are met. A school board may count a credit that a pupil earns in grade 7 or 8 towards the requirements under par. (a) 1. or (am) if all of the following are satisfied:

> 1. The pupil's performance on an examination under s. 118.30 or a similar examination approved by the school board demonstrates that the pupil is academically prepared for coursework that is offered in the high school grades. 2. The credit is earned in a course that is taught by a teacher who is licensed to teach the subject in the high school grades. 3. The credit is earned in a course that is taught using a curriculum and assessments that are equivalent to the curriculum and assessments used to teach the subject in the high school grades.

Districts committed to providing equity in access to high school academic credit for world language learning offer articulated standards- and proficiency-based curriculum through year-long courses of study to prepare students for success. The revised Wisconsin Standards for World Languages, scheduled for adoption in 2019, provide performance benchmarks to support articulation, instructional planning, and assessment. In districts with world language pathways that begin in grade 7, middle school learning in grades 7 and 8 should, at a minimum, equate to level 1 high school courses and be designed for students to enter level 2 high school courses with success. Students who begin their world language learning in elementary school, or in grade 6, may qualify for transition to more advanced coursework and receive high school credit for prior learning.

It is important to note that equity in student access to the Global or State Seal of Biliteracy and/or recognition as a Global Scholar through the Global Education Achievement Certificate Program requires sustained participation, a minimum of four years or the equivalent, of learning a single world language. Students benefit from an early start to an extended sequence of effective instruction to develop and demonstrate proficiency in a world language.
The Wisconsin Language Roadmap (2018) report provides helpful recommendations for world language program development.
https://wisconsinlanguageroadmap.wiscweb.wisc.edu/report/

The American Academy of Arts and Sciences America's Languages Report (2017) provides the national context for the critical importance of world language learning in our schools.
https://www.amacad.org/publication/americas-languages-investing-language-education-21st-century

For more information, contact Pam Delfosse, World Language and International Education Consultant, at Pamela.delfosse@dpi.wi.gov.