

Asia Society Background Information

The world in which today's students will graduate is far different than the world in which we know now. As never before, American education must prepare students for a world where the opportunities for success require the ability to compete and cooperate on a global scale. The globalization of economies, the rise of China and India, advances in science and communications technology, acceleration of international migration—and the fact that virtually every major health, environmental, and human security challenge Americans face can be solved only through international collaboration—will require our high school graduates to be far more knowledgeable about world regions, cultures, and global issues. But we have not emphasized such skills in our schools. A 2007 report from the National Academy of Sciences warns, “The pervasive lack of knowledge of foreign cultures and languages threatens the security of the United States and as well its ability to compete in the global marketplace and produce an informed citizenry.”

Over the past few years, schools and communities across the country have begun to respond to this new reality and are seeking to redesign education to produce students who are both college ready and globally competent. Asia Society has been at the forefront of these efforts, working with other educational and policy organizations worldwide to advance global 21st-century skills in K-12 education.

An important part of this work is defining what is meant by a “globally competent worker and citizen,” so schools and teachers are working toward a common goal. Asia Society is collaborating with many other leading education organizations to define global competency:

What is Global Competency? These are the characteristics of a globally competent worker and citizen in today's highly interconnected world.

- 1) **Global Knowledge** – Comprehension through study within and across academic disciplines of the critical global issues of our era such as environmental sustainability, international economic development, global conflict and cooperation, technological innovation, population growth and migration, and human rights, as well as the process of globalization itself.
- 2) **Global Analysis and Understanding** – An ability to creatively analyze problems or issues using international information sources, media and languages, and to weigh and synthesize evidence to construct compelling explanations or solutions that are credible in a given context.
- 3) **Global Perspective** – An ability to recognize one's own and others' perspectives and the influences that led to their development and an ability to integrate these perspectives into new ways of seeing and understanding how the world works.
- 4) **Global Communication** – An ability to communicate with diverse audiences, both verbally and non-verbally, including the skillful use of world languages, technology and media.
- 5) **Global Innovation and Action** – A capacity to view oneself as prepared and able to operate successful within a global economic and civic environment, to generate and evaluate creative options for action, and to act individually or in collaboration with others in ways that effectively balance risk to reward.

Asia Society’s work to advance these skills in U.S. education and our plans for future impact are detailed on the next page.

Asia Society Education Initiatives		
	Impact to Date	Future plans
Secondary Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Network of 18 public schools in minority, low income areas with a focus on global knowledge and skills – 92% graduation rate • Curriculum development and publications 	<p>Broadly expand opportunities for globally focused secondary school education:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtain federal stimulus funds to expand network of schools • Establish specific assessment tools for schools and students
Chinese Language Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership in Chinese language field – assistance to schools and education leaders in establishing and growing programs • Growth to over 800 Chinese language programs in the U.S. 	<p>Strengthen the infrastructure and capacity of the Chinese language field to increase the number of students learning Chinese and promote high quality programs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish 100 Confucius Classrooms as examples of exemplary Chinese language practice to serve as models • Continue to lead national conferences and technical assistance
Afterschool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raised awareness of the need for global literacy in out of school time with seminal publication in 2008-2009 	<p>Advance global learning as a key component to improving the quality of after school opportunities and as a means to expand learning beyond the school day and year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional development and curriculum for after school leaders and trainers
International connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organized two inaugural events in China and India to connect educators from around Asia and U.S. to share best practices • School to school connections via video conferences and curriculum development 	<p>Develop a global education dialogue to share best practice and develop strategies and solutions around needed transformations in education worldwide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study specific issues affecting U.S. and Asian education systems to find common solutions • Create partnerships between classrooms in the U.S. and classrooms in China to expand language learning
Education Policy Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Network of 24 states working to revise state education standards to encompass global learning • Policy paper co-developed with key partners released to Obama administration 	<p>Advocate for policy change and greater investment in K-12 education about world regions, languages, and cultures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific agenda at the federal level to increase resources for global learning and world languages

All of this work is represented by **The Asia Society Partnership for Global Learning**, a network of educators committed to sharing best practices and promoting policy innovations to help our schools prepare students to be both college-ready and globally competent. The Partnership provides the Education Department a means to connect the various strands of our work to systematically engage practitioners, policymakers, and the public through publications, professional development, digital media, and meetings, including our annual conference tentatively scheduled for July 8-12, 2010 in the Washington, D.C. area.

In the last year, the Asia Society Partnership for Global Learning has reached over 5,500 educators directly through conferences, presentations and other professional development opportunities, 21,000 more through newsletters and publications distributed and sold, and an estimated 800,000 page views and downloads through the Education & Learning section of the Asia Society website.

Interest and activity in schools across the country has grown tremendously, and many more educators are engaged, but the question of how we can move international education from the margin to the mainstream of U.S. education remains.

Profile of an International Studies Schools Network (ISSN) High School Graduate

The goal of the International Studies Schools Network (ISSN) is that every student who graduates from an ISSN school possesses the knowledge, skills, and habits of mind necessary to succeed and contribute in the 21st century global environment. It is a goal for each and every ISSN student; our mission is excellence and equity in the global era. The following is a profile of the attributes we strive to develop in each ISSN high school graduate.

ISSN graduates are **Ready for College**. They:

- Earn a high school diploma by completing a college-preparatory, globally focused course of study requiring the demonstration of college level work across the curriculum
- Have the experience of achieving expertise by researching, understanding, and developing new knowledge about a world culture or an internationally relevant issue
- Learn how to manage their own learning by identifying options, evaluating opportunities, and organizing educational experiences that will enable them to work and live in a global society
- Graduate with all options open for post-secondary education, work and service

ISSN graduates have the **Knowledge Required in the Global Era**. They understand:

- Mathematics as a universal way to make sense of the world, solve complex, authentic problems, and communicate their understandings using the symbols, language, and conventions of mathematics
- Critical scientific concepts, engage in scientific reasoning, and apply the processes of scientific inquiry to understand the world and explore possible solutions to global problems
- How the geography of natural and man-made phenomena influences cultural development as well as historical and contemporary world events
- The history of major world events and cultures and utilize this understanding to analyze and interpret contemporary world issues
- Arts and literature and use them as lenses through which to view nature, society, and culture as well as to express ideas and emotions

ISSN graduates are **Skilled for Success in a Global Environment**. They:

- Are “literate for the 21st century” – proficient in reading, writing, viewing, listening, and speaking in English and in one or more other world languages
- Demonstrate creative and complex thinking and problem solving skills by analyzing and producing viable solutions to problems with no known or single right answer
- Use digital media and technology to access and evaluate information from around the world and effectively communicate, synthesize, and create new knowledge
- Make healthy decisions that enhance their physical, mental, and emotional well-being

ISSN graduates are **Connected to the World**. They:

- Effectively collaborate with individuals from different cultural backgrounds and seek out opportunities for intercultural teamwork
- Analyze and evaluate global issues from multiple perspectives
- Understand how the world’s people and institutions are interconnected and how critical international economic, political, technological, environmental, and social systems operate interdependently across nations and regions
- Accept responsibilities of global citizenship and make ethical decisions and responsible choices that contribute to the development of a more just, peaceful, and sustainable world

