

## *Latin in the Schools Today*

- Enrollments in the public schools and colleges nationwide have grown significantly over the past three decades because of increased emphasis on academics, language proficiency and literacy in English. Elementary public school Latin has doubled in the past decade!
- Latin is a mainstay in public and in academically-oriented private schools, which endeavor to give students an edge for college and careers.
- Latin-based programs are growing dramatically in the elementary and middle schools with lively, innovative programs that emphasize word roots of English and/or Spanish and Latin as an introduction to language arts. They have proven value for helping to raise verbal scores on standardized tests of English skills for average and disadvantaged students and having transfer value for other subjects in the curriculum.
- Students of diverse ethnic backgrounds find that Latin helps bring students into the mainstream of American culture and western civilization. It provides linguistic and study skills that promote success in the core academic subjects.
- Students who take Latin gain historical perspective through direct access to classical civilization and cultures that influenced the world in their own time as well as in ours. They learn ways of life, types of government, politics, a legal system, commerce and values that have similarities to and differences from our own.
- The Roman Empire was a widespread civilization of diverse peoples and cultures. Since culture study is a major component of Latin courses, modern students learn useful and relevant lessons about multiculturalism and ethnic diversity from comparing and contrasting ancient and current cultural history.
- Latin literature is one of the world's great achievements and it continues to influence many literary genres and our ways of viewing life. The Romans excelled at classical drama, history, biography, rhetoric, poetry and philosophy. By their third year of Latin, many students are reading Latin authors in their own words.
- Students are exposed to ancient culture, such as Roman art, architecture, archaeology, athletic games, family life, modes of travel and myths and legends of Greece and Rome. They gain a broad humanistic perspective while studying the language.
- In local, regional and national contests Latin students have the opportunity to demonstrate their command of the language, literature, rhetoric, word roots, art, mythology and ancient athletics. In the tradition of the ancient Olympics recognition and awards are given for excellence. Some students put on Roman banquets, markets, plays or musicals for students in their schools. Better students offer to tutor less able students so that they will do well in the competitions. Skills are reinforced with pattern drills, songs and word games.
- In 2015 over 150,000 students took the National Latin Exam in all 50 states and 20 other countries. And about 50,000 students joined National Junior Classical League Latin clubs in their schools.

Written by Virginia Barrett, Katie Robinson  
*National Committee for Latin and Greek*