



**FAIRFIELD
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

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TO: Dr. David Title
FROM: Dr. Margaret Boice
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RE: World Language Program

We recently completed a review of our World Language program at the elementary and middle levels. World language teachers in grades 4 – 8 provided input, and we worked closely with the two curriculum coordinators, Jennifer Cowenhoven (grades 4 – 8) and Eileen Frankel (grades 9 – 12) to determine this recommendation. Our goal is to design a program that addresses the mission of the Board; specifically, that we prepare each student to be a “...successful participant in an ever changing global society.” The opportunity to learn a second language supports that goal. Below you will find the proposed program additions and/or changes for each level.

Elementary Level

Currently, students in grades 4 and 5 receive instruction in Spanish. The curriculum is delivered twice a week for 25 minutes.

Our recommendation is to start world language instruction in kindergarten. The following scenarios are built into an assumption of a six day schedule rotation. Instruction in grades K-1 would be delivered once a rotation for 25 minutes. In Grades 2-5, students would receive instruction twice a rotation for 25 minutes. We believe it would be most impactful if the language was consistent (Spanish) in the elementary program. While we considered other language offerings, we determined that our focus should be on providing a strong foundation in Spanish, with an option to take Spanish or French in grade 6.

Full elementary implementation (grades K-5) would require 5.5 additional world language teachers. The program could be implemented on a year by year basis. Below is a staffing impact on a grade by grade basis:

- Grade K = .9 additional FTE: \$59,005
- Grade 1 = 1.0 additional FTE: \$64,614
- Grade 2 = 1.9 additional FTE: \$123,619
- Grade 3 = 1.7 additional FTE: \$112,400

The materials cost for grades K - 3:

- \$16,500

Middle Level

Currently, middle school students may enroll in the first year of Spanish or French in grade 7 (Spanish 10 or French 10). Upon successful completion of that course, they continue to year 2 in grade 8 (Spanish 20 or French 20). This sequence allows them to continue with year 3 of French or Spanish in grade 9, or to begin another language from our course offerings in Latin, Italian or Chinese. In grade 6, students take Spanish for 25 minutes every other day, during the English Language Arts (ELA) classes.

The current schedule of interrupting ELA classes for 25 minutes of Spanish throughout the period is not serving either content area well. Therefore, our recommendation is that the students in grade 6 be allowed to begin French or continue Spanish for a full class period, and to study the first year of the language in grades 6 and 7, completing the equivalent of Spanish 10 or French 10. They would continue with Spanish 20 or French 20 in grade 8, as is currently the sequence. Students who need additional support in Reading during middle school would be enrolled in a Reading class in place of world language, a continuation of the current practice.

We believe it is developmentally appropriate to allow two years for the first foundational level of a language. By doing so, students will strengthen their skills in the three areas of world language instruction: interpersonal, conversation in a small group; presentational, speaking to the whole group and interpretive, self-understanding of written and oral language.

In order to offer a meaningful world language program in grade 6, the team structure would mirror the grade 7 and 8 team structure. Grade 6 teams would be composed of 4 teachers; currently, most grade 6 teams are composed of 3 teachers with each teacher assigned ELA in addition to another content area. In a four teacher team, each teacher would be assigned one content area: ELA, math, science

or social studies. While the average number of students on a team would increase, the average class size would not.

This change reflects the fact that more content expertise is needed at the grade 6 level; in fact, more of our grade 5 classes are moving away from having all teachers teach multiple subjects. It is increasingly difficult for grade 6 teachers to deliver the content at the depth and rigor expected when they are preparing multiple subjects. A student's day would include ELA, math, science, social studies, Reading or world language, PE/music and Unified Arts. Each student would have 7 teachers during the day, instead of 6.

The staffing impact of adding world language and reading in grade 6:

- Grade 6 = 4.0 additional FTE (World Language): \$241,629
- Grade 6 = 1.8 additional FTE (Reading): \$118,009
- Savings of 1.0 FTE in core classes: \$64,614

- Net cost: \$295,024

The textbook cost for grade 6:

- 700 textbooks @ \$100 per book (estimated) = \$70,000

Summary:

When considering a grade by grade implementation, our first priority is establishing a full program in grade 6, then adding grade 3 and working back to kindergarten. This would prevent any interruption of instruction for students going forward towards full implementation.

The statement of philosophy of the American Council of the Teaching of Foreign languages (ACTFL) captures the essence of our proposal:

“Language and communication are at the heart of the human experience. The United States must educate students who are linguistically and culturally equipped to communicate successfully in a pluralistic American society and abroad. This imperative envisions a future in which ALL students will develop and maintain proficiency in English and at least one other language, modern or classical. “

(<http://www.actfl.org/publications/all/world-readiness-standards-learning-languages>)