

World Language Program Evaluation

Secondary Level (6-12)

2013-2014

Committee Members

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Our Philosophy

The Bernards Township School District World Language program provides a rigorous and challenging curriculum that connects the academic life of students to practical application in a global community. Through the study of world languages and promotion of cultural consciousness, our school empowers students academically and socially fostering a safe environment of respect and communication.

*The world language program fosters high expectations for each individual learner and meets the demands of the NJ Core Curriculum Content Standards.

*The study of World Languages promotes and encourages students to think critically, problem solve, and make decisions in the target language.

*Our school incorporates various teaching methods to differentiate lessons in order to accommodate the diverse styles in which all students learn.

* Our school encourages the use of technology to compliment the students' abilities to communicate in an authentic and relevant forum.

* Our students are prepared for their next levels of education and gain the confidence to be positive influences, contributing in their local communities, country, and the world.

Current status

There are eighty-one sections of world language currently being offered at the high school with an average class size of 22 students. There are fifty-eight sections of world language currently being instructed at the middle school with an average class size of 20 students. Languages currently offered are: French, Italian, Japanese, Latin and Spanish. The district offers a possible 7 year sequence of world language instruction in four different languages. Juniors and Seniors in Italian and Spanish may select Advanced Placement or a Culture and Communication course. Declining enrollment in Japanese has resulted in the language to be phased by the end of the 2015-2016 school year.

Ridge High School consists of 17 staff members in the World Language Department: 1 part-time, 14 full-time and 2 teachers who travel to William Annin Middle School for the majority of their day. Seven teachers are native or heritage speakers of the language that they teach. Of the seventeen high school teachers, nine are tenured. Our current graduation requirements include 10 credits of world languages for all students.

Students at the high school are given several opportunities to participate in academic and cultural activities. Ridge High School's celebration of World Language Month annually captivates the students and staff alike with food tastings, demonstrations and contests. Latin students regularly participate in Princeton University's Certaman and the Junior Classical Leagues State Competition. Almost every year, Ridge students participate in national academic language exams as well as the William Patterson Poetry Recitation Contest. Furthermore, students now have the option of participating in a World Language Club or Latin Club still remains a popular group for students to join.

William Annin consists of 12 world language teachers: on 4/5 world language / 1/5 ESL teacher, 2 teachers who travel to the high school for 1 period and nine full-time teachers. Among the middle school department members, currently, three teachers are native or heritage speakers of the language that they teach. Of the 11 middle school teachers, nine are tenured. Students study the same world language for all three year unless, in special circumstances, when they are enrolled in support classes that take the place of their world language. Students who do not take a language in 6th grade and have space in their schedule are enrolled in an introductory Spanish as a 7th grader and continue into 8th. There is no entry level language for 8th graders.

We have approximately 60 special education students per grade level at WAMS. Ninety-eight percent of these students do not take a world language at WAMS, but rather a study skills class titled Academic Support. That means that upon entering 9th grade at RHS, a transitional year, or in 10th grade, the students are taking a world language for the first time.

Promoting 21st Century skills and authentic assessment in the world language classroom has been a major focus of staff development through department meetings and Staff College courses for the past five years.

Past Recommendations—Changes since 2003

In 2003, the World Language Program Evaluation recommended curriculum alignment for greater consistency and clearer expectations for student achievement. This was achieved using the NJ State Supervisors of World Languages template which ensured that the standards were addressed in a meaningful context by the end of summer 2003. As per the recommendation of the French and Spanish cycles being modified at the middle school level, this was accomplished. Furthermore, French was eliminated from the elementary World Language program, leaving only Spanish as the offering at this level. Later on, due to budgetary constraints, teacher taught Spanish was eliminated from the elementary curriculum. To compensate for this cut, the elementary classroom teachers introduced Spanish to their students through the use of Muzzy, a Spanish tutorial video program. Currently, in an effort to introduce the foundation of all the Romance Languages, Latin is taught in the 4th and 5th grades. This is taught by the classroom teacher once per week for thirty minutes in place of the Muzzy video program. Soon after, the 6th grade cycle program was eliminated. In place of the language cycle, an additional full year of a World Language was implemented, giving each student an opportunity to study the same World Language for three consecutive years in middle school.

The 2003 program evaluation also recommended additional teacher training on learning disabled students in the World Language classroom. Upon review, special education training specific to World Language teachers was not offered but a 6 hour staff college course is scheduled for July of 2014. In addition, the current world language supervisor is working closely with the Child Study Team to develop suitable accommodations for students with IEPs.

To address the recommendation of implementing a modified curriculum presented at a slower pace, a new course was offered in Spanish. This course divided Spanish I (a one year course) into Spanish IA and Spanish IB (a two year course). This was in effect for eight years at the high school and as of 2011 no longer runs due to scheduling constraints. Spanish IA and Spanish IB is still offered at the middle school in 7th and 8th grade for students who do not have the opportunity to study a world language in 6th grade for various reasons.

Additional Changes

In addition to the changes cited above since the 2003 program evaluation, additional courses were added to the World Language program at the High School. Beginning in 2011-2012, the following courses were added: Latin American Culture and Society, Spanish Culture and Society, Italian Regionalism, and Topics in Italian Culture. In the 2014-2015 school year, the addition of Francophone Culture and Society will also be offered.

In order to provide a state of the art and innovative environment where students can reinforce their language instruction, a language lab was instituted at the High school for the 2007-2008 school year.

In the 2013-2014 school year, Ridge High School expanded globally through travel and cross cultural collaboration. In March, a group of Japanese High School Students visited Ridge High School as part of a weekend homestay to share their culture and to learn about that of Ridge's students. Additionally, in May, twenty-eight students studying French visited Quebec City on an Immersion Tour.

Comparison to Other Similar Districts

Ridge High School was compared to nine other high schools as part of their peer group.

- Glenrock High School (G)
- Haddonfield High School (H)
- Millburn (M)
- Mountain Lakes Borough High School (ML)
- Montgomery High School (Mo)
- Northern Highlands High School (NH)
- Ridgewood Village High School (RV)
- School District of the Chathams (SDC)
- West Windsor-Plainsboro Regional (WWP)

The languages offered among the nine comparison schools include: Spanish, French, Italian, Latin, Chinese, Japanese, German, Hindi and American Sign Language.

Similar to Bernards Township, all nine school districts offer a variety of world languages at the 6th, 7th, and 8th grade levels. Of the nine school districts, seven offer world languages at the 6th, 7th, and 8th grade level while 2 have a 6th grade exploratory program. Spanish and French are offered in all 9 districts.

The peer districts place students in levels II or III as a freshman. Eight of the nine schools transition their 8th grade students to level II in 9th grade.

Districts with yearlong 5-day WL instruction	Bernards	G	H	M	MO	ML	NH	RV	SDC *Rotating Modified 80 minute block	WWP
6	x	x		X(28mins)		x	x		X	x
7	x	x	x	X (42mins)	x	x	x	x	X	x
8	x	x	x	X (42mins)	x	x	x	x	x	x
Sequential HS Placement	III	II	II	II	III	II	II	II	II	Sp -III Fr, It - II

The following table shows the languages offered at each middle school.

Languages Offered in MS	Bernards	G	H	M	MO	ML	NH	RV	SDC	WWP
ASL			x							
French	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
German			x		x				x	x
Hindi										x
Italian	x						x			
Latin	x	x						x		
Mandarin									x	x
Spanish	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x

Comparable to Bernards Township, five of the nine school districts offer 5 different world languages in high school. Four of the nine offer less than 4 languages.

Bernards Township organizes its curriculum in accordance with the prescribed structure of a textbox. Of the nine comparable districts, three also use this type of organization. In contrast, six of the nine organize their curriculum using teacher created thematic units.

Languages Offered in HS	Bernards	G	H	M	MO	ML	NH	RV	SDC	WWP
ASL						x				
French	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
German			x		x			x	x	x
Hindi										X Beginning 2017
Italian	x			x			x			
Japanese	X through 2015-2016									
Latin	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x
Mandarin				x	x		x	x	x	x
Spanish	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Thematic Units		x	x	x	x				x	x

Nine out of the nine high schools title their courses as levels 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, or AP. For example, Spanish 1, Spanish 2, Spanish 3, etc.

Bernards Township requires graduating seniors to study 2 sequential years of the same world language for a total of 10 credits. Seven of the nine comparable districts also require 2 full years of a world language to graduate, whereas 2 of the nine comparable districts only require 1 full year of a world language in alignment with the state requirement.

Survey Findings

Six surveys were administered during the 2013-2014 school year to address the need for additional languages and to examine the sentiments of the students and staff regarding course offerings and the pacing of the middle school curriculum.

Teacher Survey - October 2013 - 24 of 26 world language teacher responses			
I believe that it would be beneficial for world language classes with more than 9 special education students to have a certified special education co-teacher present. (1 strongly disagree...5 strongly agree)	1	0	0%
	2	0	0%
	3	1	4%
	4	1	4%
	5	22	92%
I use group work often in class to increase communication in the target language. (1 strongly disagree...5 strongly agree)	1	0	0%
	2	0	0%
	3	4	17%
	4	1	4%
	5	18	78%
I feel that the pace of the curriculum allows me enough time to ensure that most students show mastery of the topics presented. (1 strongly disagree...5 strongly agree)	1	6	25%
	2	3	13%
	3	4	17%
	4	6	25%
	5	5	21%
Technology is used in my classroom on a regular basis to enhance student achievement and involvement. (1 strongly disagree...5 strongly agree)	1	0	0%
	2	1	4%
	3	8	33%
	4	4	17%
	5	11	46%
I often link topics presented in my world language classroom to the curriculum of other subjects my students study. (1 strongly disagree...5 strongly agree)	1	1	4%
	2	2	8%
	3	9	38%
	4	3	13%
	5	9	38%

I often differentiate instruction for varied learning styles and ability presented in my classroom. (1 strongly disagree...5 strongly agree)	1	0	0%
	2	0	0%
	3	0	0%
	4	14	58%
	5	10	42%
The pace of curriculum at the middle school in my language is:	a. Too fast for mastery	12	50%
	b. Too slow for mastery	0	0%
	c. Appropriate for mastery of Novice 1 and Novice 2	8	33%
	d. I am not familiar with the Middle School Curriculum	4	17%
I prefer the middle school curriculum to:	a. Remain as it is currently	4	17%
	b. Only teach level 1 of my world language divided among the three years	11	46%
	c. I am not sure	9	38%
I feel there is adequate articulation between middle school and high school. (1 strongly disagree...5 strongly agree)	1	5	21%
	2	8	33%
	3	8	33%
	4	2	8%
	5	1	4%
I feel the high school curriculum should:	a. Offer levels 1, 2(H), 3 (H), 4 (H) and Culture or AP	11	46%
	b. Remain offering Novice 1, Novice 2, Intermediate 1 (H), Intermediate 2 (H), Pre-Advanced (H) and AP or Culture.	5	21%
	c. Other	2	8%
	d. I do not have an opinion	6	25%
I feel that department meetings provide adequate training that will enhance my development as a professional. (1 strongly disagree...5 strongly agree)	1	2	9%
	2	8	35%
	3	4	17%
	4	7	30%
	5	2	9%

The training I receive (staff colleges/department meetings/faculty meetings) prepares me effectively to :	a. accommodate special education students	3	14%
	b. differentiate for mixed ability classes	8	36%
	c. accommodate students with varied learning styles	11	50%
It is important to offer cultural courses for students that want to continue their language study but do not want to take an AP course. (1 strongly disagree...5 strongly agree)	1	0	0%
	2	0	0%
	3	0	0%
	4	4	17%
	5	19	83%
American Sign Language, as a world language option, would be beneficial for students who struggle with reading and writing. (1 strongly disagree...5 strongly agree)	1	0	0%
	2	1	4%
	3	7	29%
	4	3	13%
	5	13	54%
American Sign Language should be offered at the high school as a world language option (1 strongly disagree...5 strongly agree)	1	1	4%
	2	1	4%
	3	8	33%
	4	3	13%
	5	11	46%
I believe that the best learning environment for world language students is to have a class size no larger than....	15	11	46%
	20	11	46%
	25	2	8%
	30	0	0%
The course names in Bernards Township should align with our comparable school districts. (1 strongly disagree...5 strongly agree)	1	0	0%
	2	1	4%
	3	5	21%
	4	4	17%
	5	14	58%
It is beneficial to have Latin in the elementary school to better prepare students for middle school language study. (1 strongly disagree...5 strongly agree)	1	10	42%
	2	5	21%
	3	6	25%
	4	0	0%
	5	3	13%

The results of the survey above highlighted the following trends:

Training and additional support is needed when working with special education students

Offering a non-AP option to the highest level of study is important

Class size of no more than 20 is ideal for a language learning environment

The pace of the Middle School Curriculum is too fast for mastery

Differentiation of Instruction and group work are two teaching strategies often used in WL classes

Course titles should align with other high schools in the state

American Sign Language would be a positive addition to the department

9 th Grade Student Survey – October 2013			
Overall, I felt confident in my skills for 9 th grade in...	speaking	43	12%
	writing	139	40%
	both	98	28%
	neither	71	20%
When learning new topics in my current course, it is often easy because I remember many of the things I learned in middle school. (1 strongly disagree...5 strongly agree)	1	19	5%
	2	50	14%
	3	121	35%
	4	108	31%
	5	49	14%
I felt like enough time was spent on each concept in middle school to be able to master it and succeed in the language I am studying (1 strongly disagree...5 strongly agree)	1	38	11%
	2	58	17%
	3	93	27%
	4	95	28%
	5	61	18%
I feel confident speaking the language I am studying because previous course curriculum was paced to allow for time to speak. (1 strongly disagree...5 strongly agree)	1	42	13%
	2	59	18%
	3	128	39%
	4	58	18%
	5	41	13%

I feel comfortable in my language... (1 strongly disagree...5 strongly agree)	a. speaking spontaneously on topics we have studied	130	23%
	b. writing about topics we have studied	238	43%
	c. understanding real-life readings in the language we studied (newspapers, internet articles, blogs, etc.)	135	24%
	d. none of the above	57	10%
I felt like time was spent learning about the culture of the language I studied, such as: holidays, traditions, geography, history, current events, etc.	1	33	10%
	2	57	17%
	3	100	29%
	4	77	22%
	5	76	22%

Freshman Student Survey 2 – February 2014 – 264 responses			
If Bernards Township were to enhance its World Language Course offerings (currently French, Italian, Latin, and Spanish) which language would you be most likely to select as your world language requirement? (1 strongly disagree...5 strongly agree)	American Sign Language	59	22%
	Arabic	7	3%
	German	36	14%
	Gujarati	8	3%
	Hebrew	18	7%
	Japanese	12	5%
	Korean	3	1%
	Mandarin Chinese	32	12%
	Portuguese	4	2%
	Russian	29	11%
	Tagalog	5	2%
I am happy with the current offerings	51	19%	

The results of the above 2 student surveys highlighted the following trends:

The current program results in students feeling more comfortable writing than speaking in the target language.

There is not an overwhelming amount of students who feel they mastered the content from middle school.

There is student interest in a new course offering such as ASL, German, Mandarin and Russian.

RHS Parent Survey – September 2013 – 197 responses			
The pace of the world language instruction in the middle school made it so that my child was successful when beginning their high school level courses. (1 strongly disagree...5 strongly agree)	1	19	11%
	2	21	12%
	3	46	26%
	4	44	25%
	5	47	27%
The pace of world language instruction at the middle school needs to be modified in order for my child to master the foundation of their world language of choice. (1 strongly disagree...5 strongly agree)	1	22	13%
	2	35	20%
	3	49	28%
	4	33	19%
	5	36	21%
The course titles used in Bernards Township are clear to all. (ex: Intermediate 2nd year as opposed to Spanish 4 in other districts) (1 strongly disagree...5 strongly agree)	1	41	23%
	2	42	23%
	3	55	30%
	4	22	12%
	5	22	12%
I would like my child to be offered language courses all four years of high school without AP being the only option for their senior year. (ex. A culture class) (1 strongly disagree...5 strongly agree)	1	10	5%
	2	10	5%
	3	29	16%
	4	38	20%
	5	99	53%
A world language course should focus on learning how to speak, read, write and listen in the language. (1 strongly disagree...5 strongly agree)	1	1	1%
	2	4	2%
	3	14	7%
	4	46	24%
	5	125	66%
I would be interested in a world language course that does not require my child to master reading, writing and speaking the language. (ex- American Sign Language) (1 strongly disagree...5 strongly agree)	Yes	81	43%
	No	108	57%

District Wide Parent Survey – February 2014 – 1009 responses			
If Bernards Township were to enhance its World Language Course offerings (currently French, Italian, Latin, Spanish) which language would your child be interested in taking?	American Sign Language	185	18%
	Arabic	20	2%
	German	55	5%
	Gujarati	7	1%
	Hebrew	15	1%
	Hindi	79	8%
	Japanese	44	4%
	Korean	14	1%
	Mandarin Chinese	286	28%
	Portuguese	14	1%
	Russian	8	1%
	Tagalog	0	0%
	I am satisfied with the current offerings	244	24%
	Other	38	4%

Current 3 rd & 4 th grade parent survey – May 2014 - 243 responses			
If the following courses were offered for your child to take in 6th grade, which one would your child be most likely to choose?			
3 rd Grade	115 responses		
	American Sign Lang	4	3%
	French	15	13%
	Italian	7	6%
	Latin	9	8%
	Mandarin	28	14%
	Spanish	51	44%
4 th grade	125 responses		
	American Sign Lang	9	7%
	French	12	10%
	Italian	9	7%
	Latin	15	12%
	Mandarin	24	19%
	Spanish	56	45%

Follow up questions to ASL – 13 responses			
If you selected American Sign Language for question number 2, does your child currently have sufficient knowledge of American Sign Language or study it in a private/classroom setting?	No	12	92%
	Yes	1	8%
Follow up questions to Mandarin – 53 responses			
If you selected Mandarin for question number 2, does your child currently study Mandarin in a private/classroom setting?	Yes	33	62%
	No	20	38%
If you selected Mandarin for question number 2, please select one of the following regarding your child's capabilities:	Can speak fluently	7	13%
	Can understand spoken Mandarin and speak it with some difficulty	17	33%
	Can understand spoken Mandarin but not speak it	3	6%
	Does not understand nor speak Mandarin	25	48%
	Can read Mandarin without any difficulty	0	0%
If you selected Mandarin for question number 2, please select one of the following regarding your child's capabilities:	Can read Mandarin with some difficulty	18	34%
	Cannot read Mandarin	35	66%
	Can write Mandarin without any difficulty	0	0%
If you selected Mandarin for question number 2, please select one of the following regarding your child's capabilities:	Can write Mandarin with some difficulty	16	31%
	Cannot write Mandarin	36	69%

The results of the above 3 parent surveys highlighted the following trends:

The course titles at RHS are unclear to most parents

Non-AP options should be available to all students at the highest level

World Language courses should focus on listening, speaking, reading and writing

Mandarin Chinese and American Sign Language are desired additions to the World Language Curriculum

The majority of the children whose parents would select Mandarin do not have knowledge of it already.

Recommendations

This evaluation reveals the need for revision and remediation in several areas:

Course name changes

The district needs to align course titles in all languages classes to meet state and national norms and those titles of our comparison districts. Courses should be titled Levels 1, 2(H), 3(H), 4(H), Culture 5 or Advanced Placement for the respective languages.

Middle School Curricula Pace

The pacing of the world language curriculum in the middle school for Spanish, French and Italian should be revised to better accommodate the developmental level of the of a middle school child. Students now enter in the 6th grade with only having been exposed to 4th and 5th grade Latin once per week for thirty minutes. During the 6th grade year, students take the first part 1 of level 1 of the language of their choice. In 7th grade, they take part 2 of level 1. In 8th grade, they take level 2. The intensity of the current program has produced students that focus more on grammar and writing then on fluency and general communication. Curricular revision should allow for a pace appropriate for middle school learners. Grades 6, 7 and 8 world language curricula should be revised into thematic units to build the foundation necessary to master level 1 of the chosen language. This new pace will promote appropriate time to master the three modes of communication at the novice-mid level: interpersonal, interpretive and presentational.

According to the National Council of State Supervisors of Foreign Language, “A middle school program can be designed so that students can enroll in a second year course when they enter senior high. With this as a goal, the middle school program should focus on developing language skills similar to what first year high school students achieve in the target language, rather than worrying about covering the exact same language structures and vocabulary” (Sandrock, 2003). This recommendation will offer mastery of a level 1 course in the middle school, so that when enter high school students will be well prepared for level 2. In turn, level 2 of each language will be removed from the middle school curriculum because students are not developmentally ready to master two levels of a language at the 6th, 7th and 8th grade level.

With this revision of curriculum, middle school teachers will be able to move past the drilling of grammatical concepts, and instead will be able to focus on building student confidence to be able to speak, read, write and listen in their target language. Students will also have more opportunity to be immersed in the culture of the language they study.

Course Mapping

Currently at the high school level, 9th graders that successfully complete 3 years of language at the middle school will be placed in Intermediate level 1 course, which is equivalent to a level 3 course in comparable districts. In their next 3 years at the high school, they will take Intermediate 2, Pre-advanced/Culture (when available), and AP/Culture (when available). They have the option to go the honors route as well.

We propose the revision of the middle and high school curriculum into 5 levels. Therefore, levels 1, 2(H), 3(H), Culture 4/ 4(H) and Culture5/AP would be offered at the high school. For this to occur, the entire 6-12 curriculum will not need to be rewritten just modified to accommodate the changes.

In the revision, all curricula should be revised to create thematic units that allow students to learn through the target language and not just learn the target language. The incorporation of authentic activities and integrated performance assessments will align with ACTFL and the NJCCCSs to provide a real world environment for our students to become proficient.

The French 5 culture courses will need to be developed by our staff in order to be consistent with the preexisting Spanish and Italian levels 4 and 5 culture classes.

Special Education

In the 2012-2013 school year, the Novice Spanish 1 courses had on average a special education population of 65% per class. In-class support models in other subject areas place a maximum 9 special education students per class. ACTFL recommends that a maximum class size of 15 provides opportunities for meaningful communication in a world language classroom (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, 2010).

We recommend that levels 1 and 2 of all languages have no more than 20 students per class with a maximum of 10 special education students. In addition, training with regards to the special education students in the world language classroom is needed for teachers of all levels, especially those with a large special education population in their classes.

American Sign Language

American Sign Language should be implemented at the high school level to meet the needs of students who struggle with reading and writing as well as to educate students on the societal needs to assist the deaf community. This course should be offered initially in levels 1 and 2 to meet the Ridge High School graduation requirement and then monitored to decide if expansion to additional levels should occur.

Mandarin Chinese

The addition of Mandarin Chinese should be explored in the fall of 2014 for possible implementation in the 2015-2016 school year. As the demographic of Bernards Township has changed over the past ten years, so has its desire for course offerings. The survey results showed a significant population of the community who is interested in studying Mandarin in our schools. It should be noted that six of our 9 peer districts currently offer Mandarin at the HS Level and 2 offer it at the middle school.

Timeline

5-day Program Evaluation	August 2013
Surveys	2013-2014
Survey Review	Spring 2013
Presentation to BOECC	Spring 2014
Revision of 6-8 and Level 1 Curriculum Creation of Francophone Culture curriculum	Summer 2014
Implementation of new/revised curricula	Fall 2014
Exploration of Mandarin	Fall 2014
Creation of ASL 1 Revision of 7 th and 8 th grade & Level 2 Curricula	Summer 2015
Implementation of new/revised Curricula	Fall 2015
Creation of ASL 2 & Mandarin 1* Revision of Level 3 Curricula	Summer 2016
Implementation of new/revised Curricula	Fall 2016
Creation of Mandarin 2* Revision of Level 4 Curricula	Summer 2017
Implementation of revised Curricula	Fall 2017
Creation of Mandarin 3* Revision of Level 5 Curricula	Summer 2018
Implementation of revised Curricula	Fall 2018