

William Annin Program FAQs

May my child switch languages after 6th grade?

No. The goal of starting world language instruction in the sixth grade is for students, upon completion of the three-year sequence, to achieve a novice high level of language proficiency based on the criteria of the American Council of Teachers of Foreign Language. The goal is a depth of language knowledge and ability to communicate in basic situations. With less time studying the language, students will have less opportunity to develop their proficiency to the appropriate level.

I have heard that some languages are more difficult than others. Is this true?

No language course is inherently more difficult than others. In fact, the sixth grade curriculum, available at www.bernardsboe.com, shows that the topics for all the languages are the same.

In all of our language courses, students have experienced a high level of success. In the spring of last year, as a tool for program development, 8th grade students participated in a pilot assessment of language skills. Scores across languages were consistent and impressive. In addition to high levels of proficiency, students have won awards in all courses including high scores on the National Latin Exam and awards from William Paterson University in poetry recitation in many languages.

My child has no idea what language to pick. What are some factors to consider?

While the topics studied in each language are similar in the sixth grade, the focus may be different depending on the language. If your child enjoys reading, decoding, and history, Latin may be a good choice as the focus is on culture, history and written language. The focus in the initial level is on oral skills while students develop their proficiency in reading and writing. The three romance languages, Spanish, Italian, and French, have a similar focus on the four language skills of reading, writing, speaking, and listening. The study of the cultures of these languages is an integral part of each course.

For all students, motivation is highly indicative of success in language study. If your child displays an interest in any of the cultures, languages or products of studied cultures, they should choose the corresponding language course.

How will my child hear about the world language program?

Each January, a team of world language teachers makes a brief presentation to each fifth grade class about the world language program. Information about the program in general is presented and students have the opportunity to ask questions about the classes and languages. They also discuss what students already know about each language and how their knowledge and interest may match with language choices.

What happens after the Annin program? Are all of these languages offered at the high school?

At the high school, students have the opportunity to continue with the same language, add an additional language, or switch languages. At Ridge High School, introductory to AP level language courses are offered for all of the languages offered at William Annin.

My child is interested in a language not currently offered. Does the school district consider additional language offerings?

Periodically, we survey parents and/or students to determine if our current program is meeting the community need. If we find that we have significant interest in a language or course that is not offered, we consider additional offerings.

Although it is impossible to offer every language, we try to provide a well-rounded group of languages to meet the needs of most students.

I have never studied the language my child wants to take. How will they get extra help if needed?

Many parents are hesitant to allow their child to take a language that they have no experience with due to a concern that they will not be able to assist their child with the coursework. However, all world language teachers are aware that many parents will not be able to provide their child with extra support. To help students, teachers are available for extra help, provide websites with online resources, and offer parents suggestions on how to assist students in language learning even if they are not experienced in the language themselves.

What are the expectations of the sixth grade language classes?

At William Annin, we consider the world language course to be a sixth academic course. Therefore, teachers will have the same expectation of students that they would have in a sixth grade math or history class. Students will experience homework 2-3 nights per week to provide additional practice of language structures. Students will also be assessed by a variety of assessments including tests, quizzes, and projects.

Where can I get additional answers about the program?

For further information on the world language program, please contact Kristin Fox , Supervisor of Social Studies/World Languages/ESL at kfox@bernardsboe.com.