



World Language Parent Survey Results

Appendix A

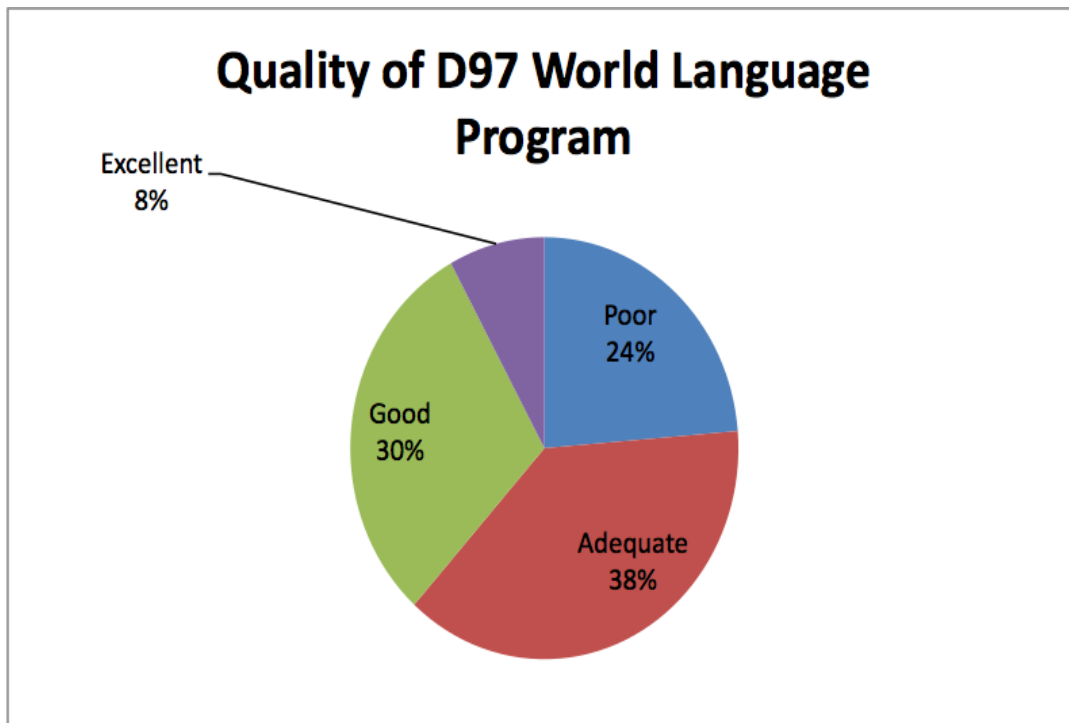
Toward the end of the 2010-2011 school year parents were asked their opinions about the District 97 World Language program. When the survey period closed 874 parents had responded. Slightly more than three-quarters of the parent responses came from parents of elementary students.

Parents were asked how strongly they agreed or disagreed with a series of statements about foreign language instruction.

Statement	% of parents selecting Agree or Strongly Agree	% of parents responding neutrally
My child talks about his/her foreign language class positively.	61.9%	21.0%
My child is challenged in his/her foreign language class.	43.0%	28.4%
My child uses the language he/she studies outside of class.	38.7%	15.2%
I am very aware of the content of my child's foreign language class.	30.9%	24.4%
District 97's World Language offerings provide a good variety and sufficient choices for students.	27.5%	32.6%
Studying a foreign language should be required at the middle school level.	84.4%	8.2%
The number of minutes for foreign language study (FLES) should be expanded in the elementary school.	69.0%	18.2%
Elementary Language immersion programs should be expanded to other schools.	70.4%	20.3%
Students should have opportunities to study other languages in the elementary school.	65.4%	24.6%
Students should have opportunities to study languages other than French and Spanish in the middle school.	72.3%	21.0%
Students with special need are being given sufficient opportunities to succeed in foreign language.	10.4%	82.8%

Overall Rating

When asked to rate the quality of the District 97 World Language program, the majority described the program as at least adequate, 8 percent described the program as excellent. Responses to other questions in the survey indicated that many parents do not know exactly what the program entails. For example, when asked about the strengths of the program or suggestions for improvements, many parents referred to the optional lunchtime and after school programs offered at some schools which are not part of the district's World Language program.



Program Strengths

An open-ended question invited parents to describe what they see as strengths of the program. More than half of the parents took the opportunity to offer opinions. The fact that District 97 even has an elementary school foreign language program that begins in kindergarten and is compulsory for all students was mentioned very frequently as a program asset. The enthusiasm and experience of the teachers was complimented, as well as their attempts to use music and a variety of activities to engage students in the study of another language. The existence of the Immersion program at Lincoln is also viewed as a positive for the district. Here is a sampling of the responses to the question "What do you think are the strengths of the District 97 World Language program?"

- "I think it is wonderful that every student in the district is exposed to a foreign language starting as young as kindergarten."
- "The very existence of such a program, regardless of the language taught. Teaching any language to young children ... exposes them to the language mechanics itself, but also cultural correlates and an early sense of being 'un citoyen du monde.' Good job, District 97."
- "Partial Spanish Immersion has been a great experience for my kids. It provides a new cultural perspective and forms the beginning of a second language that FLES alone cannot provide."
- "The instructors are wonderful, and I am glad that we have the opportunity for the children to begin world language study at the elementary level."
- "Exposure to foreign language in elementary school is very important. I appreciate that the teacher uses a mix of activities so that learning is not through memorization alone."

Suggestions

Parents were also asked for suggestions about how the programs that comprise the District 97 World Language program could be improved. Over half of the parents who shared ideas mentioned the perceived need to increase the time spent on world language at the elementary level and/or the rigor of the program in general. Nearly one quarter of the parents suggested adding more languages to what is offered. Not every parent who made that suggestion named specific languages, but when they did, Chinese/Mandarin was the most commonly mentioned.

Also popular is the idea of expanding the existing immersion program by adding additional classes at Lincoln or adding immersion tracks at other schools. Parents of students who are or have been in the Immersion program felt that articulation with the middle school could be strengthened. Increased communication about the goals and content of each program was also suggested.

- "The program doesn't offer any advancement in skills and fails to recognize that older students are capable of much more than they are offered. The program never seems to stray beyond the very easy basics. More conversational skills should be taught."
- "I understand that research shows it is best to learn a language before puberty. Spending more time on any foreign language in the early years yields benefits later, so to improve the program, District 97 needs to offer more instruction (i.e. every day) at the elementary level."
- "Offer Mandarin Chinese ... The 21st Century is being referred to as the Asian Century ... exposing our children to Asian language and culture is a good idea in preparation for the future."
- "Offer Partial Spanish Immersion Program at other schools and expand the program at Lincoln to better meet the demand. People are purchasing houses in the Lincoln School District just to be a part of this program ... Offering the program at other schools might ease the over-demand at Lincoln."
- "I have no idea what they are studying. There is no communication home other than the report card mention and that is minimal. It would be good to have an overview of the goals for each school year when the year starts."

Other Language Learning Experiences

Slightly more than one-quarter of the parents indicated that their children participate in other language learning opportunities. Those include programs offered at lunch, before, or after school by PTOs, institutional programs like the Language & Music School, religious and ethnic programs, and private tutoring, as well as everyday language exposure through family members and childcare workers.

Percent of students studying each language outside the District 97 World Language Program	
Language	Percent
Spanish	37.1%
French	20.3%
Mandarin	19.3%
German	12.9%
Japanese	7.9%
Italian	5.4%
Arabic	2.0%
Cantonese	1.5%

Other languages were mentioned by 15.3 percent of the respondents.