

World Language Board Updates – February 28, 2012

End of 2011 School Year

During the end of May, 2011, parents, teachers and administrators were requested to complete a survey about the existing world language programs (FLES, Immersion, and Middle School). There were a total of 1072 surveys completed. This included:

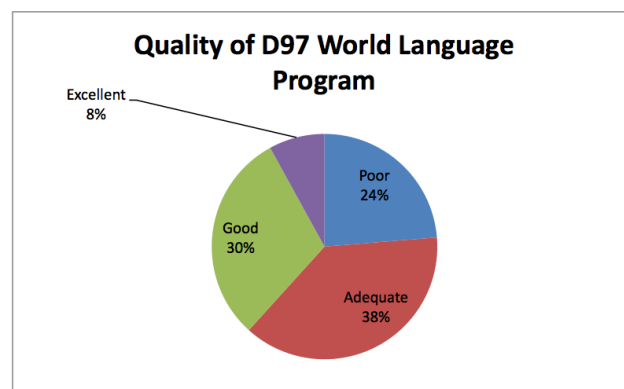
- 874 Parents
- 171 Non-Language Teachers
- 17 Language Teachers
- 10 Administrators

There were some very positive comments shared:

- "I think it is wonderful that every student in the district is exposed to a foreign language starting as young as kindergarten."
- "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."
- "It is essential that students speak another language. It is so much easier to learn a language when they are young because that keeps those synapses in the brain open and making new connections. The program builds from basic vocabulary to conversation, writing, and reading."

As well as suggestions for improvement:

- "Consistency of instruction. Clearly stated objectives for each grade level...More emphasis on culture and history... More Spanish time!"
- "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."
- "Other language options besides Spanish would be nice starting in elementary school; and more days of language instruction; more opportunities to bring the language home, e.g. fun assignments, projects, "homework" that would allow parents to engage with kids in the foreign language."



Complete Reports for both surveys are included in Appendix A and B.

In June 2011, the administration and FLES team presented a plan that represented the first steps in responding to the directive for change and advancing this primary goal.

This included developing and writing a completely new curriculum and accompanying assessments, implementing a new methodology, and increasing the amount of time in the language for our youngest learners.

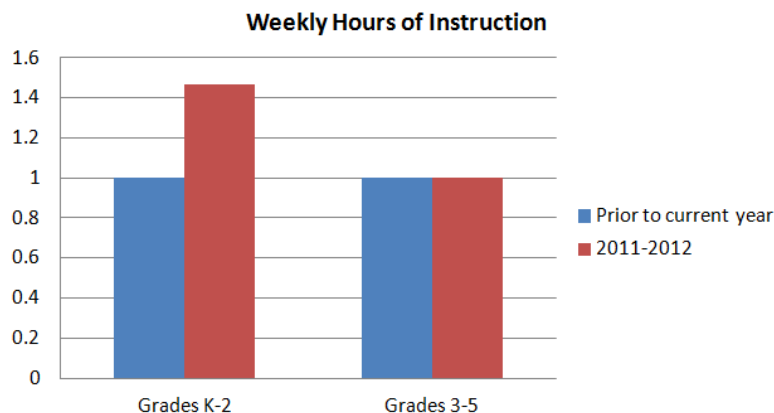
Changes for 2012-13

Curriculum Writing and New Teaching Methodology

Teachers from all strands (FLES, Immersion, and Middle School) participated in six days of professional development with world language consultant Laura Terrill focused on best practices for language instruction. Teachers created a curriculum framework based on the Five Cs (Communication, Communities, Culture, Comparisons and Connections) and the Three Communication Modes (Interpersonal, Presentational and Interpretative).

Increased Time for Youngest Students

The FLES program was modified to provide kindergarten-second grade students with 22 minutes of Spanish instruction four times a week. This totals 88 minutes a week. In previous years, kindergarten-second grade students received 30 minutes of Spanish instruction two times a week. This is a 32 percent increase in language instructional time. The students in third-fifth grade continue to have 33 minutes of Spanish instruction two times a week. The addition of two FTE teachers was required to make this change.



Middle School World Language Sections Expanded

Due to the increased demand at both middle schools, a section of French was added at each school. This allowed both schools to accommodate students' requests. This change was made possible by changes in the FLES schedules.

Sixth Grade World Language Year-Round Elective Option Added

Julian sixth grade students had the option of taking a year-long Spanish elective class and Brooks sixth grade students had the option of taking French. Language classes are still a component of the sixth grade exploratory wheel (French at Julian and Spanish at Brooks).

Next Steps – 2012-13

- Continue curriculum writing to complete units and identify instructional materials needed.
- Continue with FLES model of :
 - Kindergarten-second grade four times a week for 22 minutes of instruction
 - Third –fifth grade two times a week for 33 minutes of instruction.
- Continue to research technology options and possibly pilot a program with a grade level of students.
- Revisit the current Immersion program at Lincoln to determine if we can expand the numbers of students who could have this option without the addition of staff.
- Consider the option of adding an Immersion program at another school.
- Continue research and discussions about how we can continue to expand our program with additional languages.

Summary

This presentation will serve as a first look at the efforts that have been taken to strengthen the World Language program in District 97. One of the most important aspects of any program is a viable curriculum. The curriculum work that has been done will provide a framework for instruction as well as a foundation for future expansion of our program. The team will continue this work as we look to the future.