

Options for Consideration— Extending World Language Instruction to Middle and Elementary Schools

**Report to the School Board
January 13, 2009**

PARAMETERS

- 1. All languages currently taught at the senior high level stay in place with the option of adding another language in the future.**
- 2. One language that is currently taught at the senior high level would be extended to middle and elementary levels.**
- 3. The language would be offered at each elementary and middle school.**
- 4. Elementary and middle school core curriculum would not be disrupted.**
- 5. The program would be designed to move students progressively toward proficiency in the language.**
- 6. Students would have the choice to continue the language or choose different language in senior high school.**
- 7. Students choosing to continue the same language in high school would be appropriately placed in courses using a proficiency assessment.**
- 8. A cost neutral approach would be used / There would be no added staffing cost.**
- 9. The program would have to be sustainable / A cost neutral approach is the only way to ensure sustainability.**
- 10. The language would be taught by staff who are appropriately licensed or have community expert certification from the Minnesota Board of Teaching.**

OPTION 1

Do Nothing; Decide Against Implementing a World Language Program at the Elementary and Middle School Levels

Rationale: Based on the findings of the feasibility study that has been done, a value added program cannot be developed within the parameters that have been set. Therefore administrative staff would not recommend developing a program at this time.

PRO:

- Maintains current program and the opportunity to focus on program improvement
- Eliminates concern about changes to the current program
- Maintains allied arts offerings in middle school
- Eliminates hiring/staffing issues

CON:

- Disregards public's interest in elementary and middle school World Language program
- Fails to acknowledge best interests of students and disregards research findings:
 - optimal age for second language learning
 - early start in a progressive program can lead to greater proficiency
- Presents marketing challenge for the school district—more difficult to promote MV among metro districts that have found ways to enhance their elementary and middle school programs with world language instruction

OPTION 2

Delay Implementation for 1 Year

Rational: Based on the findings of the feasibility study a value-added language program can be developed, but additional time to work out details of program implementation is needed.

PROS

More time for...

- Exploring personnel options
- Staff preparation and curriculum work
- Sharing information
- Exploring additional options for middle school
- Continue study--Visit schools, talk with staff in other Districts

CONS

- Difficult to identify significant difference in District circumstances between '09 and '10 that would impact program start-up
- Loss of momentum
- May erode efforts principals have undertaken to clarify expectations regarding program impacts associated with the implementation of WL
- Would need a temporary “place-holder” for WL in 4th and 5th grade in '09

OPTION 3

09-10 Implement in 4th and 5th Grades Unit Studies All Students

Delay Middle School Implementation 1 Year

The Delay Plan would Include the following activities:

- Explore additional options; design elective possibilities
- Resolve staffing issues
- Do curriculum and assessment work including placement test

PROS

• **Additional time to explore middle school options and design a phase-in plan; design elective possibilities**

• **Time to address middle school staffing issues**

• **Time to work on curriculum integration in the middle school program**

• **Time to consider elementary experience that may impact design of the middle school program**

CONS

• **Difficult to substantiate the reason for the delay—circumstances not changing**

• **Miss staffing opportunities presented by attrition**

• **Miss opportunity to have elementary and middle language faculty work together to design the first year of the program**

See Cons associated with Option #2

OPTION 4

09-10 Implement in 8th Grade Full Year; All students

No 6th and 7th grade program

No Elementary program

PROS

- **Full year of the language with appropriate time and frequency**
- **Potential for more students to get to proficiency in Level 1, and be able to qualify by assessment to go into level 2 in 9th grade**
- **Straight-forward staffing**

CONS

- **Disregards community interest in elementary language program**
- **Disregards research supporting starting second language learning during elementary years**
- **Eliminates other allied options in 8th grade**

OPTION 5

09-10 Implement in 4th and 5th Grades Unit Studies All Students

09-10 Implement in Grades 6, 7, and 8 on Elective Basis Only

PROS

Choice for middle school students

CONS

- Staffing challenge
- Cannot predict numbers of sections
- Would need to establish an elective system which currently does not exist in the middle schools
- Not continuous with elementary program—difficult to justify having the program be inclusive at elementary and elective at middle school

OPTION 6

09-10 Implement in 4th and 5th Grades Unit Studies All Students

09-10 Implement 6th Grade 1 Quarter of World language, and in 7th and 8th Grades all year alternating days of WL and Physical Education classes All students

PROS

- Consistent implementation re Health, Physical Education and World Language
- Fitness Model— Continuous Physical Education classes for all students
- Adequate time and frequency for all subjects
- Improvement over other proposed options in terms of time and frequency of the language instruction

CONS

- 1 Quarter less Physical Education

OPTION 7

CURRENT PROPOSAL

09-10 Implement in 4th and 5th Grades Unit Studies All Students

09-10 Implement in 6th Grade 1 Quarter, 7th Grade 1 Quarter, and 8th Grade 1 Semester

PROS

- **Starts second language instruction at optimal ages**
- **Will prepare students who continue the language to attain a higher level of proficiency in high school**
- **Will prepare all students to study a language in high school**
- **Highly motivated students who study the language from 4th-8th grade will be prepared to take the placement test for Level 2**
- **Elementary program connects with the middle school program—students will study the language each year from 4th through 8th grades**

OPTION 7

CURRENT PROPOSAL

09-10 Implement in 4th and 5th Grades All Students

09-10 Implement in 6th Grade 1 Quarter, 7th Grade 1 Quarter, and 8th Grade 1 Semester

PROS, Continued

- The models have already been designed, reviewed and discussed widely**
- Staff is aware of the implications of the proposed models and have had input**
- Focuses and enhances the elementary unit studies model**
- Principals have determined how the models can be staffed**
- Maintains allied program with varied offerings**
- Community Education enrichment program enhances second language learning opportunities for all elementary students**
- Curricular offerings and Community Ed offerings combine in a robust response to the communities interest in second language learning experiences for elementary and middle school students**

OPTION 7

CURRENT PROPOSAL

09-10 Implement in 4th and 5th Grades All Students

09-10 Implement in 6th Grade 1 Quarter, 7th Grade 1 Quarter, and 8th Grade 1 Semester

CONS

Middle school option is not consistent with elementary program in regards to time and frequency

- Reduces the allied arts options**

- Family and Consumer Science (FACS) is eliminated at CH and EW and reduced at HV**

- Program reductions at the middle level are not uniform across the three schools**