

# Lexington Public Schools

146 Maple Street ❖ Lexington, Massachusetts 02420

**TO:** Dr. Mary Czajkowski, Superintendent of Schools  
Members of the Lexington School Committee

**FROM:** Kelly Chase, Ed.D.  
Catherine Brooks, World Language Department Head

**RE:** Update on Elementary World Language Exploration

**DATE:** January 3, 2017

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## **Introduction**

It is with pleasure that I share an update on the continued exploration of elementary world language. As you recall, the work of the Elementary World Language Task Force was recently put on pause. Despite that pause, Superintendent Czajkowski and the Lexington School Committee recognized the important work of the task force and the need to remain current in the research. To that end, Ms. Catherine Brooks, World Language Department Head, has been charged with the work of researching existing elementary world language initiatives in other districts, innovative programming and practices in the field, and current literature that may inform future decisions related to the implementation of world language at the elementary level. Below is a summary that Ms. Brooks has prepared as an introduction to her work this year. Exploratory in nature, Ms. Brooks' summary is intended to provide you with a cursory first-hand account of her research to date. Following her report, we welcome any feedback, questions, and comments regarding next steps for further research in the area.

## **From Ms. Brooks' work:**

It has been an exciting few months! During this time I have explored numerous topics regarding world language at the elementary level. I have researched current literature, participated in webinars, attended conferences / workshops, and spoken to colleagues as well as experts in our field. I am encouraged by the many ways in which students can learn about world languages and world cultures, both in traditional and non-traditional ways.

I began my work by reflecting on the work completed by the original World Language Committee in order to frame this year's exploration. The committee created a Mission and Vision Statement for Elementary World Languages, as expressed in the statement below:

*A Lexington Elementary World Language Program will underscore and emphasize the need and importance in today's global community for our students to become lifelong learners of another language and other cultures, for their personal enjoyment, enrichment, and potential career*

*paths. The program shall provide an articulated proficiency-based plan of study that develops students' language ability while inciting a passion to develop and nurture a curiosity for, and an understanding of, other people's traditions, perspectives, and way of life.*

The committee also came to consensus on tenets to which we should adhere when making decisions about the Elementary World Language Program:

- *Lexington Public Schools should offer an Elementary World Language Program that enriches the overall academic program for students.*
- *The program should be equally accessible to all students with limited exceptions.*
- *Current curricular programming and instructional time should not be compromised.*
- *The program should draw upon the skills, talents, and resources available within the community.*

After exploring the many options for Elementary World Language Programs, the original World Language Committee and the School Committee decided that a stand-alone, FLES (Foreign Language in the Elementary School), Integrated Content-Based program would be the best fit for the Lexington Public Schools. As we know, this was not an economically viable option for our school system at the present time. Below are a number of alternative programs that I have been studying in lieu of a stand-alone FLES program.

### **Distance Learning**

Distance learning is defined as a method of studying in which classes are conducted by correspondence or over the Internet, without the student needing to attend a class with a certified teacher.

The Distance Learning Recommendations from the National Council of State Supervisors of Languages (NCSSL) can be found at <http://theblvdgroup.me/papers/index.php?distancelearning>. The main points that apply to Elementary World Language Programs include the following:

- Technology should neither replace face-to-face, interactive classroom nor be the focus of instruction;
- DL should have a highly interactive, standards-based curriculum where students can apply their acquired second language skills through meaningful, real-world interactions beyond the classroom walls;
- DL classes should be staffed by both a certified language teacher and a technology support person;
- Class size should be limited to no more than 20 students.

During the past months I have explored various programs that could be implemented in an elementary setting. A number of these programs could be implemented as a hybrid model. Such a model would include an online program and an occasional (weekly or bi-weekly) meeting with a certified World Language Teacher. One such online program is Middlebury Interactive Languages. The original World Language Committee also looked at this option. This fall I attended a webinar in which the presenter explained and answered questions about the content, presentations and assessments that are provided with the program.

### **Outside of the School Day Programs**

Although the original World Language Committee believed that a program outside of the regular school day posed potential access issues, there are many programs across the United States that offer world language courses as a fee-based, outside of the school day program. The programs range from after school “Language and Play” immersion models to more traditional standards-based instruction models.

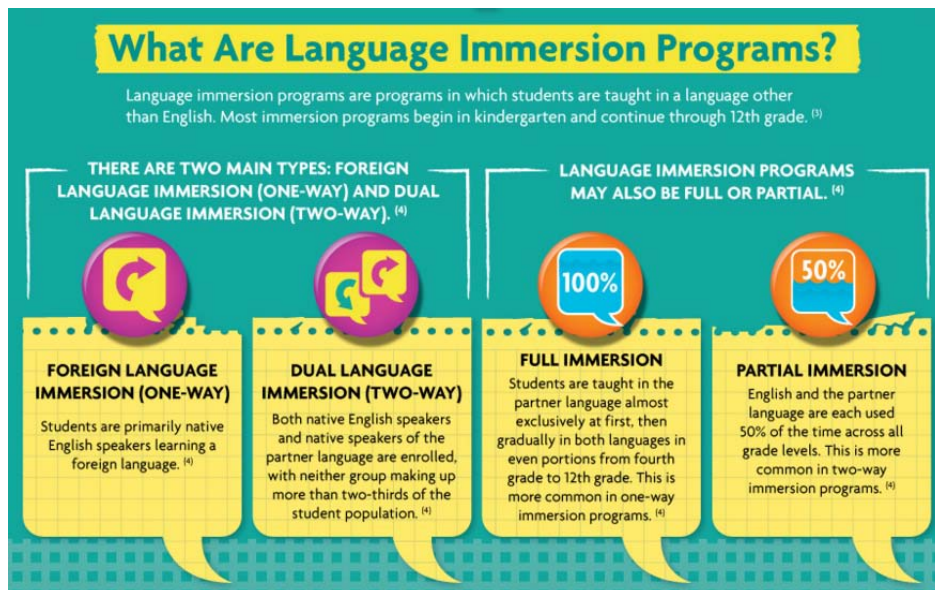
Of particular interest to me is a publication named *Global Competence in Expanded Learning Time: A Guide for School Leaders*, authored by Carol McElvain and Jaime Stephanidis, and published by the Asia Society in 2011 ([http://asiasociety.org/files/afterschool-eltpprint\\_0.pdf](http://asiasociety.org/files/afterschool-eltpprint_0.pdf)). In this publication the authors aptly note, “With this higher accountability and responsibility, many schools find that if they expand the boundaries of time, space, and partners, they can better achieve global competence, provide more opportunity and connections for their students, and broaden their stakeholder groups of support.”

This guide also defines an expanded learning program as an “integrated array of activities that are intentionally designed to align curriculum, instruction, and assessment across in school and out-of-school time. Ideally, an expanded learning program will result in the recognition, based on proficiency rather than seat time, that a student has fulfilled a requirement toward a course credit, diploma, certificate, or some other meaningful marker.” In the same publication the authors discuss opportunities for “expanded learning” such as:

- Global arts programs that introduce students to the diversity of cultures and traditions worldwide;
- Exposure to foreign languages, especially less commonly taught languages such as Chinese and Arabic;
- Service learning projects that connect local and global issues;
- Internships and apprenticeships that help students explore careers in a global economy;
- Cross-cultural communication and collaboration via international exchange projects (both real and virtual).

### **Language Immersion Programs**

Together with Robyn Dowling Grant, Coordinator of English Language Learner Education, I have begun to research Dual Language Immersion Programs. We have recently begun to collect and examine research that frames the three main goals of Dual Language Immersion programs: student academic achievement, biliteracy/bilingualism, and intercultural competence. I attended conference workshops that highlighted the successes and challenges of Dual language Immersion programs. We are planning school visits to local Dual Language Immersion Programs, and will continue our research in the new year. The graphic included below provides an overview of types of language immersion programs:



<http://www.early-childhood-education-degrees.com/immersion-programs/>

### The Seal of Biliteracy

A common theme throughout my research is the validation and recognition of biliteracy in our students (both students studying world languages and ELL students). One way to recognize the value of the great language diversity in our Lexington community and the idea of bilingualism as an asset is through a pilot of the Seal of Biliteracy. The Seal of Biliteracy recognizes students at various levels who speak, listen, read and write proficiently in another language in addition to English. There is currently a Bill in the Massachusetts legislature that would establish a State Seal of Biliteracy. A number of communities in Massachusetts have begun to implement a local Seal of Biliteracy, and I have joined a Seal of Biliteracy Workgroup in order to learn more.

There are a series of Pathway Awards and criteria for these awards established by the Massachusetts Language Opportunity Coalition in their *Seal of Biliteracy Toolkit* (<http://mafla.org/wp-content/uploads/SealofBiliteracyTOOLKIT.pdf>):

**Biliteracy Attainment Award** to students completing elementary school (Grade 5) or middle school able to demonstrate an intermediate-low proficiency level (or higher) in a language other than English and proficiency on the MCAS ELA.

**Silver Seal Award** to students completing eighth grade or high school able to demonstrate an intermediate-mid proficiency level in a language other than English and proficiency on the MCAS ELA.

**Gold Seal Award** to students completing high school able to demonstrate intermediate-high proficiency in a language other than English and proficiency on the MCAS ELA.

**Platinum Seal Award** to students completing high school or college able to demonstrate advanced-low proficiency level or higher in a language other than English and proficiency on the MCAS ELA.

### Conclusion

I am grateful for Ms. Brooks' continued work in the area of elementary world language and for the School Committee's continued support. While Ms. Brooks' work to date has been broad in its focus, we welcome input, questions, and feedback from committee members regarding narrowing the research to a particular area or focus, exploring additional areas of study, and/or providing in-depth analysis for one or more of the programs described above. As always, we are incredibly grateful for your support that allows for this continued study.

# Elementary World Language Exploration

Update Presentation

Ms. Catherine Brooks, World Language Department Head

January 3, 2017

## Reflection - Original WL Committee Document Review

*A Lexington Elementary World Language Program will underscore and emphasize the need and importance in today's global community for our students to become lifelong learners of another language and other cultures, for their personal enjoyment, enrichment, and potential career paths. The program shall provide an articulated proficiency-based plan of study that develops students' language ability while inciting a passion to develop and nurture a curiosity for, and an understanding of, other people's traditions, perspectives, and way of life.*

# Consensus / Beliefs of the Committee

- LPS should offer an Elementary WL program.
- The program should be established without compromising current curricular and instructional programs.
- The program would require a longer school day and redesign of current schedule.
- The program should be equally accessible to all students with limited exceptions.
- The program should draw upon the skills talents and resources of the community.



# Review of Original Committee's Exploration of Options

- Content-Based Program
- Integrated Program
- Full / Partial Immersion
- Exposure / Enhancement Program

# Content-Based Program

A certified WL teacher gives direct instruction to students for a determined time period according to World Language Standards. This type of program is generally a stand-alone program.



## Original committee concluded:

- Simplest to design and implement
- Does not add to core subject teacher workload/responsibility
- Would be easiest for hiring
- Travel/classroom needs considerations and may lead to isolation of WL teachers in schools
- May need to extend school day as to not impact existing curriculum
- Would require additional re-articulation of MS and HS programs
- EXPENSIVE

# Integrated Program

A certified WL teacher gives direct instruction to students for a determined time period according to World Language Standards. This type of program is generally a stand-alone program. This language instruction reflects the other core courses. May be co-taught with core subject teachers and requires a significant amount of pre-planning.



## Original committee concluded:

- Demonstrates a serious commitment to WL learning which enriches overall program
- May create greater depth of understanding
- Could include community member resources
- Requires more time to design, plan and implement with core subject teachers
- May need to extend school day as to not impact existing curriculum
- Would require additional re-articulation of MS and HS programs
- EXPENSIVE

# Full/Partial Immersion Program

An immersion classroom provides students with a learning environment in which the target language is the primary language throughout the day OR in some portion of the day.

## Original committee concluded:

- Would offer the most proficiency-based experience with target language
- May impact equity across schools
- Significant impact on curriculum articulation
- Recruitment of highly qualified staff w/multiple certifications a challenge
- Require substantive overhaul in current practice and curriculum

# Exposure/Enhancement Program

Students are exposed for a limited amount of time to one OR a number of languages to increase and enhance their awareness of other countries, their languages, and traditions.

## Original committee concluded:

- Program is not aimed at language proficiency
- Would require no loss of instructional time
- Possibilities to offer multiple languages and tap into existing community resources
- Would compete with existing after-school programs
- Equity: not all students would be able to participate
- Staffing, funding, quality of program and supervision is complicated
- Articulation issues as students move to MS

# New / Previously Discounted Option Exploration

Distance Learning

Hybrid Programs

Outside of the School Day Programs

Dual Language Immersion

# How can **DISTANCE LEARNING** or **HYBRID** programs benefit LPS students?

The Distance Learning Recommendations from National Council of State Supervisors of Languages (NCSSL):

- Technology should neither replace face-to-face, interactive classroom nor be the focus of instruction.
- DL should have a highly interactive, standards-based curriculum where students can apply their acquired second language skills through meaningful, real-world interactions beyond the classroom walls.
- DL classes should be staffed by both a certified language teacher and a technology support person.
- Class size should be limited to no more than 20 students.

*\* Middlebury Interactive Program: Most often used as blended model. For example: teacher meets once a week with students and a classroom monitor assists with technology at other times during the week. Students can access at school and at home. Includes assessments to be assessed by WL teacher.*

What is being done to continue research:

- Examining DL programs. Most are aimed at homeschooling, not public elementary school.  
Middlebury Interactive,  
Symtalk, Time4Languages (by Rosetta Stone)
- Attended Webinar with Middlebury Interactive\*

## How can **OUTSIDE OF THE SCHOOL DAY** programs benefit LPS students?

A number of districts across the country are offering Elementary World Language as an outside of the school day, fee-based option:

**This is one example that includes details about vision, goals, timing and fees:** “Our Elementary World Language Program is based on a FLEX model. FLEX programs aim to give students a foundation for world language study while introducing basic phrases and encouraging communication. Our WCS FLEX program will nurture speaking and listening skills while also helping students develop an appreciation of other cultures and customs. Not only will students learn in each of the language programs, they will have fun learning!” <http://www.wcs.edu/parents-students/elementary-world-languages/>

**This is a guide to beginning an “Expanded Learning Time” program:** The [\*Global Competence in Expanded Learning Time\*](#) guide, directed at school leaders and leadership teams, is meant to provide practical guidance on how to expand time and space for learning in order to better prepare students to participate and succeed in our global economy and global society. It will help you think about how an expanded learning program can help you produce globally competent graduates, how you can leverage partnerships with community-based organizations to do so, how to plan for implementation appropriately, and how to assess whether you are reaching your goals. [http://asiasociety.org/files/afterschool-eltprint\\_0.pdf](http://asiasociety.org/files/afterschool-eltprint_0.pdf)



# How can LANGUAGE IMMERSION PROGRAMS benefit LPS students?

## What Are Language Immersion Programs?

Language immersion programs are programs in which students are taught in a language other than English. Most immersion programs begin in kindergarten and continue through 12th grade. <sup>(3)</sup>

THERE ARE TWO MAIN TYPES: FOREIGN LANGUAGE IMMERSION (ONE-WAY) AND DUAL LANGUAGE IMMERSION (TWO-WAY). <sup>(4)</sup>



### FOREIGN LANGUAGE IMMERSION (ONE-WAY)

Students are primarily native English speakers learning a foreign language. <sup>(4)</sup>



### DUAL LANGUAGE IMMERSION (TWO-WAY)

Both native English speakers and native speakers of the partner language are enrolled, with neither group making up more than two-thirds of the student population. <sup>(4)</sup>

LANGUAGE IMMERSION PROGRAMS MAY ALSO BE FULL OR PARTIAL. <sup>(4)</sup>



### FULL IMMERSION

Students are taught in the partner language almost exclusively at first, then gradually in both languages in even portions from fourth grade to 12th grade. This is more common in one-way immersion programs. <sup>(4)</sup>



### PARTIAL IMMERSION

English and the partner language are each used 50% of the time across all grade levels. This is more common in two-way immersion programs. <sup>(4)</sup>

What is being done to continue the research:

- Examining research on student academic achievement, biliteracy/bilingualism, intercultural competence
- Attending workshops
- Exploring existing Dual Language Immersion programs with Robyn Dowling-Grant, Coordinator of the English Language Learners program.

<http://www.early-childhood-education-degrees.com/immersion-programs/>

Language Immersion  
Education  
in Minnesota





Comments, Questions, Next Steps?