



# Lexington Public Schools

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**To:** Dr. Paul B. Ash  
Members of the Lexington School Committee

**From:** Carol A. Pilarski

**Re:** Elementary World Language Committee – Status Report

**Date:** May 13, 2014

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The purpose of this memorandum is to provide you with an update on the current status of the World Language Committee charged by Superintendent Ash to: *discuss the process and steps that would need to be put in place in order to investigate and study the possible re-instatement of an Elementary World Language Program in the Lexington Public Schools.*

In October 2013, a call was issued for volunteers to serve on the newly formed World Language Committee, with a goal toward gathering a diverse and cohesive group that would be representative of multiple constituencies within the district. The aim was to assemble a team consisting of elementary classroom teachers, world language teachers, specialists, district administrators, parents, and community members.

I am proud and delighted to report that this committee has worked diligently and earnestly in addressing their charge. While our work has been challenging, it has, at the same time, been immensely productive and fulfilling. As one might imagine, we all commenced this undertaking with varied personal and professional points of view, different levels of understanding regarding what the elements of a strong World Language Program should include, and a variety of other divergent “polarities.” Throughout this journey, our goal and objective have been to work collaboratively to bring us closer to a common vision of what a high quality Elementary World Language Program in Lexington should be. Our journey in this process has been thorough and transparent. Our conversations have been both honest and respectful. I believe that it has been our collective commitment to the goal of our task and the inherent respect for each other’s opinions that have allowed us to move forward as a team that will ultimately represent its collective best judgment in bringing our recommendations forward on June 10, 2013.

To date, this committee has met eight times, with much additional work being done outside of meeting times, investigating research on the implementation of a World Language Program at the elementary level. We have collected information on such programs in other districts across the country and in neighboring districts. We have discussed and assessed elements and types of multiple programs in an effort to select those which will best serve our district's overall needs.

In our work, we have dutifully abided by our agreed to norms:

- |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
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| <p><i>Norms</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Start on time</i></li><li>• <i>Assume positive intention</i></li><li>• <i>Demonstrate respectful interactions</i></li><li>• <i>Give others a chance to speak and be "heard"</i></li><li>• <i>Recognize that we <u>each</u> and <u>all</u> contribute to the success of this committee</i></li><li>• <i>Be collaborative – Maintain an Open Mindset</i></li><li>• <i>Maintain confidentiality where appropriate</i></li></ul> |
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Beginning with our very first meeting at the end of October and throughout the course of our subsequent meetings, the committee's work has been structured to evolve in three distinct phases:

- I. Examination of Research & Exploration of Existing Program Approaches
- II. Consideration of Viable Options for Lexington Public Schools
- III. Formulation of Recommendations

We have been dedicated to providing opportunities for the World Language Committee to engage in research and discussion that is both robust and revelatory, and with a level of breadth and depth that ensures consideration of myriad viewpoints and ideas. Throughout our work thus far, we have aimed to maintain an "open mindset" with regard to possibilities balanced with limitations, expectations tempered with realities, and historical perspectives considered along with opportunities for innovation.

We also have made room in both our individual and collective thinking to recognize that our viewpoints, no matter how passionate or ambivalent they might have been at the beginning of the process, would evolve over time to reflect our acquisition of knowledge, our examination of data, and our commitment to the process of discovery and discourse.

Listed below is an outline of topics and discussions that have taken place in the first two phases of our work. We are looking forward to our remaining sessions scheduled in May and June, as we continue our charge.

## I. Examination of Research and Exploration of Existing Program Approaches

### Meeting #1: October 30, 2013

- Introduction of Committee Members
- Outline of Committee's Charge and Goals
- Creation of, and agreement on group "norms"
- Beginning of Research: World Language Survey of Programs Currently in Place Locally and Nationally

*At the initial meeting of the World Language Committee (WLC), participants had an opportunity to introduce themselves to the group and share their reasons for volunteering to join in this endeavor. The committee also set "norms" for each of the subsequent WLC meetings. Superintendent Ash spoke with the group about the historical antecedents of elementary world language instruction in the Lexington Public Schools, and outlined the evolution of the formation of the WLC. He also shared in detail both the charge of the committee, and how the group's work will inform decision-making on this topic in the future. Finally, committee members were asked to conduct initial independent research into existing programs using a common survey form so that the resulting data could be gathered and analyzed at our next meeting. (Appendix 1)*

### Meeting #2: November 20, 2013

- Overview of LPS Grade 6-12 World Language Program – Rebecca Bray, Sarah Franford, and Marie Murphy  
*In order to familiarize committee members with the district's current World Language program, middle school and high school staff members gave a presentation outlining language offerings and answering committee members' questions.*
- Review of various articles and reports on Elementary World Language  
*What the research tells us:*
  - There is a resurgent interest across the country in beginning the study of world languages in the early grades
  - Many early education language programs which started in the 50s were 'lost' in the 80s and 90s
  - Early study of a second language results in cognitive benefits, gains in academic achievement, and positive attitudes toward diversity (Rosenbusch, 1995)
  - Providing students knowledge of other cultures augments necessary skills to be citizens of a global society
  - Students more seamlessly are able to make inter-disciplinary connections

- The three major ingredients of a high leverage world language program include: Communication, Culture, and Connections to other disciplines
  - Proficiency reflects the student's ability to communicate in a functional and practical way with a native speaker in the target language
- Review of World Languages Research Gathering Survey - 30 responses (Appendix 2)  
*The group worked together to formulate a set of common questions that would be asked of districts (nationally or locally) who currently had an elementary World Language program in place. The assignment for committee members was to utilize this common survey when contacting or researching a school district, record the information, and report back on their findings. In addition to collecting specific information about various programs, this also served as an opportunity for members to begin to reflect on what qualities and aspects of certain programs resonated with them individually or as a possible "fit" for Lexington.*
  - Group work – members shared research surveys and reported out on the characteristic elements of various World Language programs in other communities.  
*The information collected through this data gathering process was discussed in small group sessions and then shared in break-out groups. Members reported on the pros, cons, and highlights of each of their findings.*

### **Meeting #3: December 10, 2013**

- Overview for SKYPE call
- Minnetonka, MN Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Dennis Peterson
- Feedback and Impressions of that district's Total Immersion Program  
*The committee, through a very interactive one and a half hour Skype discussion, gathered an impressive amount of information from Dr. Peterson and the Total Immersion Program that exists in the six elementary schools in Minnetonka, MN. It should be duly noted that Dr. Peterson was extremely generous with his time, both in planning for and participating in this conference. Some important background information:*
  - *Minnetonka is a suburb of Minneapolis and is a district of about 10,000 students*
  - *The district includes and serves a very expansive geographic area*
  - *There is "open enrollment" in Minnetonka, so that parents and children can select their school of choice within the district*
  - *Six elementary schools have total immersion programs, four of which are in Spanish and two in Mandarin*
  - *Their immersion program reflects a "school within a school model." The English speaking program runs concurrently with the immersion program*
  - *The district receives \$65 million from the state in open enrollment funds which helps in covering the expenses of these immersion programs*

- *The Strategic Planning process in preparing for the immersion programs took ten years*

#### **Meeting #4: January 23, 2014**

- Paul Hurteau, Director, OneWorld Classrooms  
*Mr. Hurteau is a member on the Board of Directors for this non-profit organization whose mission it is to “foster global awareness and cross-cultural understanding in the context of K-12 curriculum to prepare young people for local and global citizenship in culturally diverse settings.” Its mantra is “building bridges of learning between the classrooms of the world.” Lexington currently participates in the Art Exchange program offered by OneWorld Classrooms and is seeking to expand its 9-12 Art partnership to include the exchange of K-12 works of art by students at all levels. It does not offer a stand-alone language program. Their programs are designed to enhance and supplement curriculum in all domains, whether in the Social Sciences, foreign language study, the Performing Arts, Visual Arts, etc.*
- Jorge Allen, K-12 Coordinator of World Languages, Andover Public Schools  
*Mr. Allen attended this meeting with Paul Hurteau. Andover had recently completed a four year study exploring the possibility of initiating an elementary world language program. The study committee made a recommendation to the superintendent and school committee to offer a FLES (Foreign Language at the Elementary Schools) Program. They also recommended the hiring of a K-12 coordinator of World Languages to establish and implement this recommendation. Unfortunately, once hired, it was apparent that there were still several unresolved issues about what the elementary language program would look like and Mr. Allen has been researching and investigating collaborative efforts with OneWorld Classrooms. His charge has now shifted from focusing on designing a one language program to focusing on globalizing the district’s existing curriculum.*

#### **Meeting #5: February 26, 2014**

- Middlebury Interactive Languages – Kathy Zapcic, sales representative  
*Middlebury College is well-known for its foreign language teaching among the nation’s higher education institutions. They have partnered with a technology-based company (K12, Inc.) to form a new venture that “will” create innovative, high quality online language programs for pre-college students. They have, together, created online language courses intended to serve all levels of language learning.*
- Group review of the three phases of our efforts:
  - Research
  - Viable Options
  - Recommendations

- Survey - Taking stock of the Group's Polarities/Positions  
*Harvy Simkovits, Lexington resident and committee member offered to work with me to design a survey that would help the committee membership gather information that would assist in discerning differences and identify commonalities in thinking about a number of factors related to the development of an elementary world language program. Members of the committee completed the survey. All responses were submitted anonymously. (Appendix 3)*

|                                                                         |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>II. Consideration of Viable Options for Lexington Public Schools</b> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|

**Meeting #6: March 25, 2014**

- Review purpose of 'polarities' exercise
- Share survey results & process information through small, representative group work and report out in whole group discussion
- Re-poll survey was administered after this discussion to assess any changes in polarities

**Meeting #7: April 10, 2014, Ad Hoc Committee**

- Dr. Ash reiterates WLC charge and goals
- Sub-Committee Review of March 25 meeting notes and re-poll survey results
- Planning for WLC full committee meeting to shape the three recommendations to be presented to Dr. Ash and the School Committee
- Sharing of Needham Public Schools recently approved plan for a K-5 World Language program

**Meeting #8: April 30, 2014**

- Whole-committee review of re-poll survey in four groups
- Discussion of the framework for the formulation of recommendations that will be presented to the Superintendent and School Committee on June 10, 2013
- Completion of worksheet identifying the type of Language Program priority and the pros, cons, and accompanying requirements needed to support such a program (Appendix 4)

### III. Formulation of Recommendations

#### **Decisions to be Considered and Formalized at Future Meetings in order to Shape Specific Recommendations:**

- *What type of program will LPS offer? (Appendix 5)*
- *Will the program be optional or required?*
- *Which language or languages will be offered?*
- *What grade level/s should be involved?*
- *At what grade level will we recommend introducing the language/s in the first year of implementation?*
- *How much time should be allocated for this program?*

#### **Current Agreements:**

- *Resounding consensus that the Lexington Public Schools should offer an Elementary World Language Program*
- *Equity for all students has emerged as a common theme. The program should be equally accessible to all students with limited exceptions.*
- *Current curricular programming and instructional time should not be compromised*

Clearly, there is much more work and thinking to be accomplished. In our next meetings, we will continue to hone in on the specifics which will define the three recommendations that we will provide to the Superintendent and School Committee on June 10. This goal will represent the primary and sole focus of our future agendas in the remaining weeks.

I look forward to our meeting on Tuesday to answer any questions you might have.

#### ***ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS***

World Language Committee  
2013-2014

Alessandro Alessandrini  
Dr. Nabila Baba-Ali  
Katie Bettencourt  
Rebekah Bray  
Cathy Brooks  
Sarah Felton  
Sarah Franford

David Frohman  
Laura Horst  
Karen Kishpaugh  
Anne Knight  
Gina Leto  
WenShuai Liao  
Ruth Litchfield

Marie Murphy  
Carol A. Pilarski - Chair  
Deirdre Schadler  
Julie Selhub  
Harvy Simkovits  
Mary Ann Stewart  
Holly Stumpf

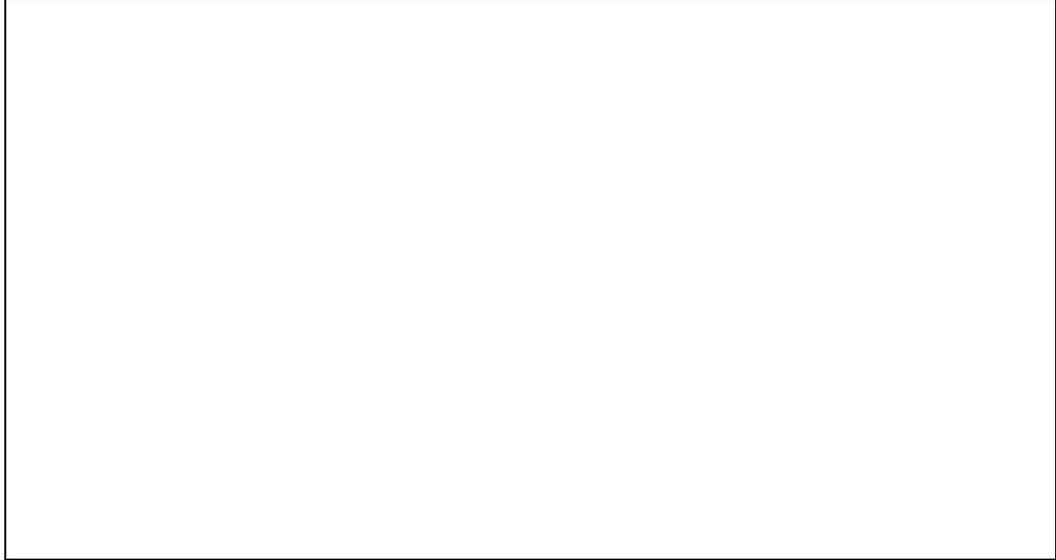
Leonard Swanton  
Jennifer Turner  
Karen Thompson  
Joan Yarmovsky

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Elementary World Language Survey  
Program Reporting Form

1. Name of School District: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Language/s taught: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Grade level/s: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Type of program: immersion, separate course, integrated, etc. \_\_\_\_\_
5. Optional  Required
6. During school day  After school hours
7. Number of minutes or hours per week: \_\_\_\_\_
8. Year program was established: \_\_\_\_\_
9. World Language choices available upon entering middle school in that district
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_
10. World Language choices available at that district's high school
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. \_\_\_\_\_
  - e. \_\_\_\_\_
11. Cultural Demographics of community: \_\_\_\_\_

12. Other Information: (goals of program, curriculum materials, staffing, etc.)

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for providing additional information such as program goals, curriculum materials, or staffing details.

**World Language Committee****2013-2014****Program Reporting Forms Submitted from:**

Arlington Public Schools – Arlington, VA – David Frohman

Buckingham Browne & Nichols – Cambridge, MA – Marie Murphy

Bedford Public Schools, Lane School – Bedford, MA – Karen Kishpaugh

Bedford Public Schools – Bedford, MA – Leonard Swanton

Bloomfield Hills Schools – Bloomfield, IL – Rebekah Bray

Blue Valley School District – Overland Park, KS – Rebekah Bray

Brookline Public Schools – Brookline, MA – Sarah Franford

- Newton
- Bedford, Hanscom

Cave Creek Unified School District – Scottsdale, AZ – Sarah Felton

Chicago Public Schools – Chicago, IL – Julie Selhub

[www.confuciusinstitutechicago.org](http://www.confuciusinstitutechicago.org)

Dover-Sherborn Public Schools – Dover, MA – Marie Murphy

Duxbury Public Schools – Duxbury, MA – Marie Murphy

East Grand Rapids Public Schools – Grand Rapids, MI – Rebekah Bray

Fairfax County Public Schools – Fairfax County, VA – Ruth Hickox Litchfield

FLEX program – Maria Haynes

Center for Applied Linguistics

<http://www.cal.org/resources/digest/marcos02.html>

Holliston Public Schools – Holliston, MA – Karen Kishpaugh

<http://www.holliston.k12.ma.us/curriculum/flcr.htm#mvg>

Lexington County School District One – Lexington, SC – Cathy Brooks

Lincoln Public Schools – Lincoln, MA – Deirdre Schadler

Lower Merion School District – Ardmore, PA – Rebekah Bray

Madison Public Schools – Madison, CT – Anne Knight

[http://www.madison.k12.ct.us/uploaded/docs%2FCurriculumGuides/WLCurriculum\\_.pdf](http://www.madison.k12.ct.us/uploaded/docs%2FCurriculumGuides/WLCurriculum_.pdf)

(over)

Medford Public Schools – Medford, MA – Deirdre Schadler

Minnetonka Public Schools – Minnetonka, MN – Nabila Baba-Ali

Pinellas County Schools – Pinellas County, FL – Rebekah Bray

Portland Public Schools – Portland, Oregon – Laura Horst

**Immersion Programs:**

Japanese at [Richmond Elementary](#), [Mt. Tabor Middle School](#), and [Grant High School](#).

Spanish at [Ainsworth Elementary School](#), [West Sylvan Middle School](#), and [Lincoln High School](#)

Mandarin at [Woodstock Elementary](#) and [Hosford Middle School](#).

**Dual Language Immersion Programs:**

Spanish at [Atkinson Elementary](#), [Hosford Middle School](#), [Cleveland High School](#)

Spanish at [Beach Elementary School](#), [Jefferson High School](#)

Spanish at [Cesar Chavez School](#), and [Roosevelt High School - S.E.I.S.](#)

Seattle Public Schools International Schools – Seattle, WA – Rebekah Bray

Sharon Public Schools – Sharon, MA – Marie Murphy

Thames Valley District School Board – London, Canada – Harvy Simkovits

Wauwatosa Public Schools – Wauwatosa, WI – Jennifer Turner

Winchester Public Schools – Winchester, MA – Katie Bettencourt

Winchester Public Schools, Lynch Elementary – Winchester, MA – Wenshuai Liao

Zhongguancun 2<sup>nd</sup> elementary school, Beijing, China – Wenshuai Liao

**Lexington Public Schools Elementary World Language Committee**  
***Moving from Data Gathering to Knowledge Generation:***  
***Taking Stock of the Group's Positions and Polarities***

**Exercise Premise:**

- **Everyone takes positions on specific issues; some of those positions can generate polarized sides.** Both sides of a polarity can exist in every person (leading to “being on the fence”), though most people generally take a position regarding an issue.
- **The WLC group is a microcosm of the whole community.** What’s inside the people here is an approximate representation of what’s in the community of parents, teachers and administrators.
- **Learning about and exploring people’s positions and polarities can support taking better and more collaborative action** that serves the larger community.
- **An effective, open dialogue among people in the extremities and middle of our positions and polarities** creates a greater opportunity for effective movement and action at the larger community level.
- **Participants are allowed (even encouraged) to change their positions** as more perspectives are provided and discussed.
- **Useful information we can work with is better than seeking “perfect” information.**
- **Personal confidentiality/anonymity will be maintained and respected.**

Process for WLC participants’ positions and polarities data gathering:

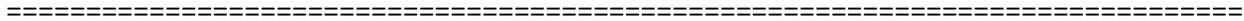
- A. **Read the attached questionnaire** and ask any questions you may have about the definition of terms.
- B. **Answer the attached questionnaire** on your own, considering where your mind is currently regarding each issue/polarity presented.
- C. **Copy your answers onto a second questionnaire** to take with you and bring back next time. (You don’t have to copy your long-hand answers to open questions.)
- D. **Hand in your first questionnaire;** do not put your name on it – in order to maintain your anonymity.
- E. **Aggregate results of this questionnaire will be presented to the group at our next meeting.** It will then inform our discussion in coming to some kind of consensus on practical WL education options for our elementary schools.



5. If you chose or leaned toward “required,” what is your **current frame of mind** regarding the **type of WL program** that should be introduced into Lexington’s elementary schools? (rank order 1, 2, and 3, with “1” being your most preferred; only provide your top 3 preferences)

- WL exposure or enhancement** program
- integrated WL program** of language/culture (co-taught within relevant subjects/topics)
- content-based WL program** (similar to past LPS program, with a scope and sequence)
- partial WL immersion** program (in a *portion* of the subjects, or a *portion* of time)
- total WL immersion** program (in *most* of the subjects, or *most* of the time)
- another option (please explain)

What are **your reasons** for being where you are?

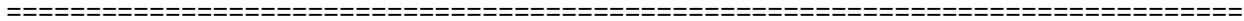


6. **What grade level(s)** do you think should participate in a WL program? Circle all years that apply.

K – 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5

At **what grade level(s)** do you think an elementary WL program should be introduced in **the first year of implementation**? Circle the year(s) below that you think would work best to begin an elementary WL program.

K – 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5



7. **Which language(s)** do you think should be introduced into the elementary schools? (rank order 1, 2, and 3, with “1” being your most preferred; only provide your top 3 preferences)

- Spanish
- French
- Mandarin
- American Sign Language
- Multiple – specify languages: \_\_\_\_\_
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**World Language Committee Meeting  
Guiding Questions for Recommendations:**

1. What type of program? *Exposure/Enhancement; Integrated; Content Based; Full/Partial Immersion*
2. Which language?
3. Which grade level/s would participate in this elementary World Language Program?
4. Which grade level/s would participate in the 1<sup>st</sup> year of implementation?
5. Optional or required?

| <b>PROS</b>         | <b>CONS</b> |
|---------------------|-------------|
| <b>REQUIREMENTS</b> |             |

## **DEFINITION OF TERMS**

### **Exposure/Enhancement**

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

### **Content Based**

A Foreign Language certified teacher gives direct/language instruction to students for a determined time period in accordance with identified and agreed to Foreign Language curriculum standards in reading, writing, speaking, listening and understanding. This type of program is generally a stand alone program.

### **Integrated**

A Foreign Language certified teacher gives direct language instruction to students for a determined time period in accordance with identified and agreed to Foreign Language curriculum standards in reading, writing, speaking, listening and understanding where language instruction reflects, to the greatest extent possible, the content of other core courses. These sessions may also be co-taught in conjunction with core subject matter teachers and requires a significant amount of pre-planning.

### **Full/Partial Immersion**

An immersion classroom provides children with a learning environment in which the target language is the primary language of instruction throughout the day OR in partial immersion, in some identified portion of the day. Students participate in **ALL** regular learning activities in the target language.