

Standards: The world language curricula was aligned to the latest version of the National Standards for World Language Education.

Rationale: It is critical for students today to engage in learning that is relevant, rigorous, and rewarding. In addition to engaging in learning that is cognitively demanding and challenging, students need to be able to apply their knowledge and skills across contents and contexts within the school environment, and more importantly in the “real world.” For it is when this application extends outside the boundaries of the school, that interest, relevance, and value are maximized.

While the curriculum is designed to support the transference of knowledge and skills, district staff working together must learn and work to provide authentic and engaging learning opportunities for students. As they engage in such learning within the world language curricula, students will learn the skills and knowledge necessary to expressively and receptively communicate in their language of study outside the school setting.

Course

Changes: Given the low enrollment in Japanese over the last few years, a curriculum was not written for Japanese 3 and 4. Although students currently enrolled in Japanese will be able to finish the sequence if they so desire, it will be moved to a two year offering (Japanese 1 and 2) prior to being phased out. The 7-12 department is discussing the possibility of offering Mandarin beginning in middle school and through the high school.

Items of note: The following are a few items of note regarding the world language curricula:

- The learning goals and proficiency scales are largely skill-based as a priority was placed on the children’s ability to communicate in all its forms. The learning targets do contain some “knowledge” (ie: vocabulary for transportation) items that will be learned as they apply their understanding of the knowledge through the skills learned.
- While the curricula are all very similar, the three core languages (Spanish, French, and German) are pretty much the same. In Latin, children are taught to read, among other things, but there isn’t a focus on speaking as Latin is not a spoken language today. Japanese is unique from the three core languages due to the dramatic difference in its alphabet and the fact that items such as subject-verb agreement, conjugations, etc. aren’t found in the language.
- To align with new standards and current trends, we’ve shifted from the courses being “foreign” languages to “world” languages.