

WORLD LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN COUNCIL ROCK

CITIZENS FOR EDUCATION'S GENERAL POSITION

Citizens For Education (CFE) considers world language instruction to be essential to the curriculum of the Council Rock School District. World language knowledge gives Council Rock (CR) students a valuable experience in global awareness, in addition to providing students with a needed college requirement and/or a competitive admissions edge to a college of their choice.

To strengthen the study of World Language in CR, CFE supports reinstating the Exploratory World Language curriculum that was eliminated in 2002. Offering an Exploratory World Language option in 7th grade will help students better inform their language decision in 8th grade, thus helping World Language to be a more robust part of Council Rock's profile.

Since CR does not offer school language programs as part of the curriculum until 8th grade, reinstating the Exploratory World Language curriculum in 7th grade could be the first step toward introducing World Language in the lower grade levels.

ELEMENTARY LEVEL

Five CR elementary schools offer students the opportunity to take before or after school foreign language classes through a "Hello" Languages program, offered by a private provider, with enrollment as indicated below:

<u>SCHOOL</u>	<u># of students in "Hello" Languages</u>	<u>BEFORE OR AFTER SCHOOL</u>
Goodnoe	26	before
Sol Feinstone	35	Before 2x a week
Holland	Between 15 and 20	before
Wrightstown	8 , including homeschoolers	classes held at 3:50 pm
Richboro	10	before

In addition, Newtown, Churchville and Welch elementary schools offer foreign language instruction through a private provider of a FLEX (Foreign Language Experience) program. All of these classes are held once a week.

Parents pay for both of the above programs and provide any necessary transportation. The skill level of the elementary classes consists of cognates, colors and play, and is designed to build confidence in the ability to learn another language. In addition, early exposure to a second language increases fluency and understanding in that language when formal instruction begins.

Rolling Hills Elementary did offer a program but it was cancelled due to low enrollment. Hillcrest does not offer a foreign language program, citing a lack of classroom space even though at least one of the other elementary programs meets in the Library.

MIDDLE LEVEL

Currently there are no world language classes during the Council Rock school day until 8th grade, when students have a choice between French 1, Spanish 1 or German 1. Latin is not offered until 9th grade. In 8th grade, between 75 and 82% of the students start a language, receiving instruction for 1

period a day, 5 days a week. Most of the other students continue in their Literacy Skills class in 8th grade.

Below is the number of students who have requested a Level 1 Language class in next year's 2016-17 8th grade:

Middle School students' language requests for 8th grade 2016-17			
	<u>Holland</u>	<u>Newtown</u>	<u>Richboro</u>
German	31	47	27
French	15	72	22
Spanish	138	186	119
Latin	Not offered until 9th grade		

Council Rock last offered an Exploratory World Language curriculum in 2002, just before the configuration of Holland, Newtown and Richboro were changed from junior high schools consisting of 7th, 8th and 9th grades to middle schools, consisting of only 7th and 8th grades. At that time, Exploratory was eliminated, and, in its place, CR mandated that every 7th grader take a Reading course 5 days a week. In 8th grade, students were offered the option of a Level One language course. Offering Level One language in 8th grade paved the way for the possibility that students could take a 5th year AP language course at the high schools. See CFE Article "Offering Exploratory World Language in CR" at www.citizensforeducation.com/curriculum.

Council Rock's Exploratory World Language instruction (course which was eliminated) allowed every regular education student to "explore" three foreign language classes, receiving 45 days of instruction in Spanish, and 22 or 23 days in both French and German. Given the exposure to all 3 languages by the end of 8th grade, each student had a better understanding of each language and were able to make a more confident selection when it came time to choose which language they wished to study in 9th grade and throughout high school.

Since 2002-03, eligible students may choose a language (for which they may have had no substantive exposure) and receive instruction for 5 days a week for the full year in 8th grade. For the 2015-2016 school year, the chart below shows the teacher breakdown and number of sections of language instruction in 8th grade at the middle level:

<u># of Teachers and Sections in Council Rock's 2015-2016 8th Grade</u>				
	<u>TEACHER TOTALS</u>	<u># SECTIONS PER SCHOOL</u>		
<u>LANGUAGE</u> ¹	<u>FOR EACH LANGAUGE</u> ²	Holland	Newtown	Richboro
French 1	1.2	2 sections	2 sections	1 section
German 1	0.8	no German	2 sections	1 section
Spanish 1	2.0 plus two 0.8 teachers	5 sections	7 sections	5 sections
1. Latin is not available until 9th grade				
2. Some teachers also have .2 travel time				

HIGH SCHOOL

During the time when Exploratory was offered, there was far less attrition in the foreign language

program at the high school and the Level 4 classes of each language were filled. By 9th grade, over 90% of CR students elect a language. Yet there is a drop off in enrollment between the 3rd and 4th year of a language.

Enrollment totals for all grades in the 2015-16 school year and enrollment numbers of students requesting Foreign Language for the 2016 -17 school year is as follows:

<u>LANGUAGE/ School Year / School</u>	<u>2015- 2016 Enrollment</u>		<u>2016-2017 Requested*</u>	
	NORTH	SOUTH	NORTH ⁽¹⁾	SOUTH ⁽²⁾
German	56	105	68	128
French	200	137	209	132
Spanish	702	950	673	938
Latin	108	77	115	79
Total # CR High School World Language students	1010	1164	1065	1149
* These #'s reflect student requests and may vary in Sept. due to scheduling conflicts etc.				
(1) 4 AP South French Students will shuttle to North and are in North's classroom numbers				
(2) 10 German 4 students from North will shuttle to South and are in South's classroom numbers				

Though it is unusual, a student can elect to take an AP language course instead of a Level 4 course if they are willing to do the coursework for advancement during the summer. Nine out of ten students in each AP language offering actually take the AP test for college credit. Details in CR's enrollment numbers by school and course can be found in The Academic Standards committee's presentation on May 5 at: <http://www.crsd.org/Page/832>

COLLEGE LEVEL

Most universities want 3 years of high school level language. For most students that would mean completing Level 3 of a language, that was started in 8th grade. Most colleges accept AP classes taken in high school with a score of 3 or above as college credit.

ADDENDUM

Citizens For Education would like to thank Lynn Young for her time in gathering data for this article, and the many CR world language dedicated professional teachers who work diligently to make world language an important part of their students' lives in preparation for college, and in our increasingly global society.

Citizens For Education intends to keep you informed on the status of World Language offerings in CR. If you are interested in some of the world language programs at other elementary, middle and high schools in the Southeastern PA area, please see CFE article "World Language Education in other PA School Districts" at www.citizensforeducation.com/curriculum .

Citizens For Education is interested in your opinion and feedback. Please feel free to contact us at: citizensforeducationcr@gmail.com.