

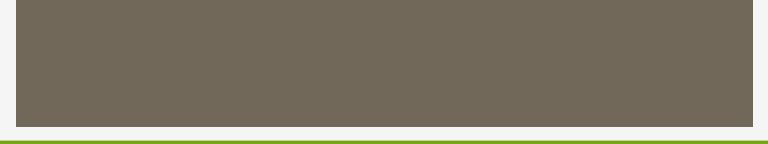
Redding Elementary World Language Study

Redding Board of
Education

May 7, 2013

Study Group Members:

- Stephanie Pierson Ugol, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction
- Carrie Wessman Huber, RES Principal
- Steve Gormley, Parent
- Betsy Higgins, Parent
- Linda Meyer Mitchell, Parent
- Jen Wastrom, Parent



- “Learning a foreign language, and the culture that goes with it, is one of the most useful things we can do to broaden the empathy and imaginative sympathy and cultural outlook of children.”

- ~Michael Gove, United Kingdom Education Secretary

Study Rationale:

- Committee Charge:
 - *Identify the components of an exemplary world language program continuum, kindergarten through twelfth grade.*
 - *Determine what is desirable and feasible for a world language program at Redding Elementary in 2013 – 2014.*

Guiding Questions

- *What is the 'right' grade level for students in Redding to begin to learn a world language?*
- *What language should be taught?*
- *What model of instruction should be used?*
- *What tools should support the instruction (technology, art, literature, movement and dance, music)?*
- *What characteristics describe the ideal teacher of elementary world language?*
- *What programs might we visit in other similar districts to learn about content of instruction and implementation of a world language program?*
- *What are the long and short term goals of the study group? Identify timeline.*
- *What resources are currently available? What resources might be identified for future funding?*
- *What are the logistical and procedural issues to be considered? (work or cultural exchange visa for teacher, certification options, Board approval)*
- *What conditions are necessary to support the implementation of a world language program? (scheduling, funding, integration with curriculum, teacher and community support)*

Research Highlights:

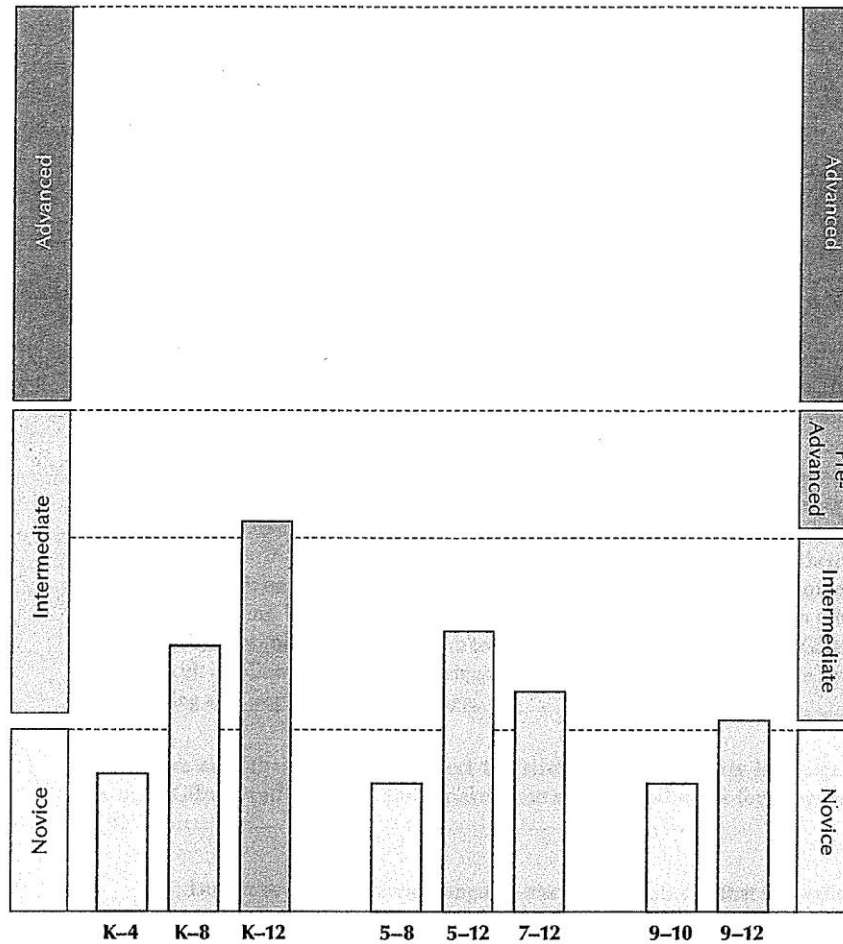
- Begin Early
 - Young learners have a natural curiosity about learning which is evident when they engage in learning a new language.
 - Young students are open and accepting of people who speak other languages and come from other cultures.
 - Beginning foreign language instruction early sets the stage for students' to develop advanced levels of proficiencies in one or more languages.
 - Younger learners possess the capacity to develop near native-like pronunciation and intonation in a new language.

Research Highlights:

- Academic Achievement

- Students are more proficient with foreign language in middle school -- even if they switch languages -- if they have had an intro to foreign language in elementary school.
- Foreign language instruction increases creativity, problem solving skills, improves memory and develops critical thinking.
- Students with learning disabilities have shown a proficiency in foreign language study, which often results in experiencing academic success for the first time.
- Early foreign language instruction improves academic achievement as demonstrated on standardized tests in reading, language arts and mathematics.

● **FIGURE 17.3** Visual Representation of Anticipated Performance Outcomes as Described in the ACTFL Performance Guidelines for K–12 Learners



Note: Descriptors are based on information gathered from foreign language professionals representing a variety of program models and articulation sequences. Descriptors are appropriate for languages most commonly taught in the U.S. Descriptors assume a sustained sequence of Standards-based, performance-outcome language instruction. The descriptors on the left refer to the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines. The descriptors on the right refer to the ACTFL Performance Guidelines for K–12 Learners.

Source: *Foreign Language Annals* 31, no. 4 (Winter 1998): 484. © ACTFL 1998. Reprinted by permission of ACTFL.

Hands-On Research World Language Programs

- DRG A Elementary World Language Programs:
 - Darien
 - New Canaan
 - Weston
 - Westport
- Other Elementary World Language Programs Visited:
 - New Canaan
 - Glastonbury
 - Greenwich
 - Danbury

Goals of an Elementary Program:

- Short Term:
 - Launch a pilot program
 - Gain community support
 - Work in partnership with core classroom teachers
 - Create an integrated world language curriculum
 - Develop cultural activities to enhance world language instruction
 - Establish an ER9 K-12 world language committee

Goals of an Elementary Program:

- Long Term:
 - Build language proficiency with each new year of study
 - Expand program to deliver world language to all elementary grades
 - Cultivate a desire to continue the study of a second language in all students
 - Establish K-12 language learning continuum
 - Grow secondary schools/elementary school mentorship possibilities

Components of Elementary World Language:

- Speaking and Listening
 - Elementary School
- Reading and Writing
 - Secondary

Program Models

- Proficiency
 - Content -Based FLES (Foreign Language in the Elementary School)
 - Regular Sequential FLES
- Exposure/enrichment
 - FLEX (Foreign Language Exploratory Program)

Traditional Approach to Language Instruction:

- Vocabulary and grammar taught via thematic units of study
- Stand alone curriculum

Integrated Approach to Language Instruction:

- RES core curriculum serves as base
- Meaningful communication in target language via content-based instruction
- Cultural aspect of language experience may be supported through art, music, library media, PTA events and after school programs
- Possible integration curriculum topics: shelter project (grade 1), monarch butterfly project (grade 1), weather study (kindergarten)

Which Language?

- Spanish – Direct Instruction
 - Goal – Develop proficiency
- Chinese - Enrichment/Integrated with Art
 - Goal – Develop understanding of diverse cultures

Typical Unit Integration:

- Grade 1 Shelter Project

Typical Schedule:

- Kindergarten and Grade 1
 - 4 days per week, 10 to 15 minutes per day
- Sample Daily Push-in Schedule
 - K-12:30-12:40
 - K-12:45-12:55
 - K-1:00-1:10
 - K-1:15-1:25
 - Gr.1-1:40-1:55
 - Gr.1-1:55-2:10
 - Gr.1-2:10-2:25
 - Gr.1-2:25-2:40

How Will Program Success be Measured?

- Student work and interviews
- Teacher and parent feedback
- Observations of program in action
- On-going committee meeting

Next Steps :

- Pending budget approval – Post opening for .4 world language position and hire teacher
- Provide professional development for hired teacher and classroom teachers

- Implementation
- Convene K-12 world language review committee
 - Current offerings
 - Program evaluation
 - Review of best practice
- Consider committee recommendations, K-12

- “Nobody ever doubted the power of language. But who would have imagined that the words we hear and the sentences we speak might be leaving such a deep imprint?”

- ~Yudhijit Bhattacharjee, *The New York Times*



Questions?

References:

- Research indicates that children who are exposed to a foreign language at a young age achieve higher levels of cognitive development at an early age. (Bialystok & Hakuta 1994; Fuchsien 1989)
- Language Learners show greater cognitive flexibility, better problem solving and higher order thinking skills. (Hakuta 1986)
- People who are competent in more than one language consistently outscore monolinguals on tests of verbal and nonverbal intelligence (Bruck, Lambert, Tucker 1974, Hakuta 1986, Weatherford 1986)
- Foreign language Learners have better listening skills and sharper memories than their monolingual peers. (Lapkin, et al 1990, Ratte 1968)
- Students with poor skills may even have the most to gain from the opportunity to study languages (Masciantonio, 1977;Garfinkel and Tabor, 1991)
- Students who are learning a foreign language out-score their non-foreign language learning peers in the verbal, and the math sections of standardized tests. (2007 Study Harwich Mass)