



A Framework for Expanding Opportunity: World Languages in Elementary Schools

Overview

In its Horizon 2020 Strategic Plan, the Albemarle County School Board stated in strategic objective 3.2 that schools would develop a robust PK-12 world languages program. In its work session in on September 29th, 2014 the board defined a robust program as one that begins in preschool or kindergarten and continues through middle school. The board supported using immersion programs in schools whenever possible and using pull-out world language programs to support students not able to participate in immersion, with an ultimate goal of having some form of world languages programming available to all county students in five to seven years. The purpose of this document is to lay out a plan for achieving these board goals by 2020.

The expansion of world languages has deep implications for increasing opportunity in Albemarle County (please see [this research brief prepared for ACPS](#)). New research shows that bilingualism has cognitive benefits that can last a lifetime. World Languages is not just an add-on to what Albemarle County is already doing – it is an amplifier and catalyst for the pedagogical work that the division advocates in its lifelong learner standards. Teaching across languages forces educators to be even more explicit about building communication and collaboration skills and providing the scaffolding necessary for students to engage deeply in those activities. It also requires us to think more deeply about vocabulary and concept attainment and to deepen the connection between language and experiential, problem-based learning in maker spaces where students use language to create, innovate, and expand their understanding of the world. Designing new world languages programs changes the way teachers plan together and inspires cross-curricular learning experiences. We are designing a new learning environment for our students and expanding world languages is an impetus to design a truly 21st century curriculum and pedagogy.

Elementary Schools

Current State

Currently, systematic world languages instruction at the elementary level is offered only at Cale Elementary School, though a variety of internal programs have been initiated at a variety of schools (see chart below). All students at Cale in kindergarten through 2nd grade receive pull-out or immersion classes in Spanish. The school has sufficient staffing in the current budget to continue the program's expansion to 5th grade by the 2017-2018 school year. Additional funding for expansion will be needed only for materials and professional development.

World Languages initiatives in elementary schools in recent years	
School	Initiative
Agnor-Hurt Elementary School	Kindergarten Spanish with TA
Baker Butler Elementary School	Spanish classes offered by volunteer parents
Brownsville Elementary School	After School Program
Cale Elementary School	Pull-out and Immersion K-2
Meriwether Lewis Elementary School	After School Program
Murray Elementary School	Rosetta Stone
Stony Point Elementary School	Kindergarten Spanish

Expanding to Other Schools

Expanding world languages to additional schools will take place using a tiered approach, i.e. world languages programming will be added to 2-4 additional schools each year until all elementary schools have world languages programming by the 2019-2020 school year. The Department of Instruction will support elementary schools in undergoing a self-assessment to determine readiness to initiate world languages programming in the following school year. The Department of Instruction will introduce budget initiatives to the school board during each budget cycle to expand world languages to schools identified as being ready through this assessment.

Types of Programming

An important part of expansion will be determining which schools are capable of supporting immersion programs. Due to mobility and the need to offer at least one non-immersion classroom, it is difficult for schools with fewer than four classrooms at a grade/cluster level support immersion. This challenge notwithstanding, smaller schools are welcome to undergo a self-assessment to determine the feasibility of piloting immersion. The following chart shows which schools that could most easily adopt immersion, which would be more likely to adopt a pull-out only model, and approximate *additional* FTE needed to implement programming. Variation in FTE needs is due to the extent to which a particular school implements immersion, e.g. Stone Robinson could implement immersion in half of its classes, cutting in half the cost of a pull-out program. FTE need for pull-out instruction is based on an assumption of 1 teacher supporting approximately 225 students, i.e. two 30-minute lessons per week.

SOUTHERN FEEDER PATTERN					
Immersion/Pull-Out	Pull-Out Only	Fall 2014 Enrollment	Capacity*	Immersion/Pull-Out FTE	Pull-Out Only FTE
Cale		667	642	-	-
Stone Robinson		443	515	1	2
	Yancey	138	135	.6	.6
	Red Hill	169	160	.8	.8
	Stony Point	247	225	1	1
	Scottsville	191	178	.8	.8
NORTHERN FEEDER PATTERN					
Immersion/Pull-Out	Pull-Out Only	Fall 2014 Enrollment	Capacity*	Immersion/Pull-Out FTE	Pull-Out Only FTE
Baker Butler		627	632	2	3
Hollymead		513	488	1	2
Agnor-Hurt		502	600	1	2
Greer		607	542	2	3

	Woodbrook	328	312	1.5	1.5
	Broadus Wood	310	360	1.5	1.5
WESTERN FEEDER PATTERN					
Immersion/Pull-Out	Pull-Out Only	Fall 2014 Enrollment	Capacity*	Immersion/Pull-Out FTE	Pull-Out Only FTE
Brownsville		728	756	2	3.3
Meriwether		427	380	1	2
	Crozet	331	342	1.5	1.5
	Murray	264	316	1	1
TOTAL APPROXIMATE FTE				18.7 FTE	26 FTE

*Based on approved capacity in the [long-range planning commission report](#).

Sequencing a Roll-out of World Languages in Elementary Schools

Each year, for the next 4-5 years, Albemarle County Public Schools will introduce world languages programming into a new group of elementary schools. This process will ensure that all elementary schools in Albemarle County have opportunities for learning world languages by school year 2019-2020. The Department of Instruction will introduce budget initiatives to the school board during each budget cycle to support this expansion. The chart below shows a sample timeline of expansion for immersion and pull-out only schools.

PROGRAMS	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20
Immersion	0	1	0	1	0
Pull-Out Only	1	3	3	3	3

Determining Readiness

The Department of Instruction will support elementary schools in undergoing a readiness assessment to determine if they are prepared to begin a world languages program for the next school year. This process will include a demonstration of understanding and support for program curriculum and design among administration and staff, a short and long-term staffing plan for a school-wide program, and a description of how community support will be leveraged to advance the program. In addition, schools will undergo a process by which they choose a language and this will make up part of the readiness assessment. Choosing a language will include an analysis of languages already spoken among students and staff at the school; feedback from parents, staff, and the wider community; and consideration of which languages are already taught within the same feeder pattern so that students may continue their studies in middle school.

Curricular Needs

By school year 2015-2016, Albemarle County will need a curriculum for its elementary world languages programs, including both pull-out and immersion programs. This curriculum will include approved resources for Spanish instruction and add resources in other languages when schools identify new languages to teach in elementary school.

Middle Schools

Current State

All middle schools currently offer Level I of a world language spread across three semesters in 7th and 8th grade. Recently, more and more students have been taking only the 8th grade course. In addition, most middle schools offer a 6th grade exploratory world languages course. There is great variation in

curriculum for this course and enrollment has dropped precipitously due in part to lack of opportunities in students' schedule due to double blocking of language arts and math.

A Plan for Moving Forward

In its September work session, the school board requested a plan for adapting the middle school world languages offerings based on strategic objective 3.2 and expansion of world languages into elementary schools. In a September meeting of the world languages vertical team and an October meeting of middle school principals, consensus was reached around the following:

- Middle schools will move the current 7th grade semester course down to 6th grade, spread it out over the year when possible (e.g. 45 minutes every other day) and make world languages the "5th core." This would entail requiring all students to take world languages courses in middle school and no longer double blocking students in language arts and possibly math. If we do not revisit practices around double blocking, expansion of world languages in middle school would be detrimental to other programs such as CTE, art, and music.
- Middle schools will begin to offer Level II of world languages in 8th grade.
- The above will require a rethinking of middle school scheduling as part of a larger redesign of middle school curriculum and pedagogy to offer a greater variety of educational experiences.
- Principals feel that most of these changes can be accomplished without significant increases in staffing; although a small supplement may be necessary in some cases.

The chart below shows a draft timeline for making changes to middle school world languages programs:

New Course	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019
6th grade semester Conversational Course	Redesign Middle School Schedules	Redesign Middle School Schedules	Henley Sutherland Jouett Burley Walton		
7th Grade Level I	Redesign Middle School Schedules	Redesign Middle School Schedules		Henley Sutherland Jouett Burley Walton	
8th Grade Level II	Redesign Middle School Schedules	Redesign Middle School Schedules			Henley Sutherland Jouett Burley Walton
Tasks	*Redesign Middle School Schedules, no longer double blocking LA and requiring World Languages. *Create curriculum for 6 th grade conversational course. *Connect piloting principals with other principals in other divisions. *Meet with each piloting principal in November and February to discuss staffing and scheduling. *Include small (.25-.5) increase in staffing in budget initiative for schools piloting 7 th grade Level I the following year.				

Division Level

Leadership

The curriculum and management needs of world languages in the county will grow such that at least a .5 leadership position is needed to guide program development.