

Research behind increasing World Language study and proficiency:

How does language learning support academic achievement?

Being bilingual actually changes the anatomy of the brain. People who speak two languages have more grey matter in the language region of the brain. The earlier they learned the language, the larger the grey area. The degree is correlated with the proficiency achieved.

The College Entrance Examination Board (CEEB) has reported that students who averaged four or more years of F.L. study scored higher on the verbal section of the SAT than those who had studied four or more years in any subject area. Our students all take the ACT or MME in 11th grade. In order to have completed four years of F.L. before taking this exam, students would have to begin early. Accordingly, we can expect that our 11th graders who began taking F.L. in elementary school will be likely to outperform those who, in the past, had waited until H.S.

The length of time students study a F.L. relates directly and positively to higher levels of cognitive and metacognitive processing. (Rosenbusch, 1995)

Language learning can benefit all students.

Language learning correlates with higher academic achievement on standardized test measures.

Language learning is beneficial in the development of students' reading abilities.

There is evidence that language learners transfer skills from one language to another.

There is a correlation between second language learning and increased linguistic awareness.

There is a correlation between language learning and students' ability to hypothesize in science.

There is a correlation between young children's second language development and the development of print awareness.

There is a correlation between language study and higher scores on the SAT and ACT Tests.

There is a correlation between foreign language study and higher academic performance at the college level.

How does language learning provide cognitive benefits to students?

There is evidence that early language learning improves cognitive abilities.

There is evidence bilingualism correlates with increased cognitive development and abilities.

There is a correlation between bilingualism and the offset of age-related cognitive losses.

There is a correlation between bilingualism and attentional control on cognitive tasks.

There is a correlation between bilingualism and intelligence.

There is a correlation between bilingualism and metalinguistic skills.

There is a correlation between bilingualism and memory skills.

There is a correlation between bilingualism and problem solving ability.

There is a correlation between bilingualism and improved verbal and spatial abilities.

How does language learning affect attitudes and beliefs about language learning and about other cultures?

Research suggests that language learners develop a more positive attitude toward the target language and/or the speakers of that language.

Steps taken and those that will be taken?

World Language Committee

- 1)** Continue researching and advertising the rationale for an early start to the study of foreign language to clarify the reasons for implementation. (See timeline below)
- 2)** Inform teachers, administrators, parents, and the community about the rationale for elementary school foreign language programs, strategies for teaching foreign language at this level, program models and outcomes, and articulation models.
- 3)** Research various models by reading professional literature, consulting with language professionals, and visiting existing programs.
- 4)** Explore models for articulating the foreign language across levels to provide for an uninterrupted sequence of instruction that will result in higher levels of fluency in the language. (End of course exams?) When will assessments for proficiency be provided?

Communication and Timeline:

March- Recommendation to CCC on March 17

March 29- Recommendation to Board of Education

April- Communication meetings at the elementary buildings (co-facilitated)

April- Begin recruitment of Spanish teachers

May-August- Curriculum Work