

Agenda Topics

Feeder Pattern for Language Immersion (K-8) to World Languages (high school)

Akeshia Craven-Howell, CMS Executive Director of Transformation under which the Office of Magnet Schools and Programs falls was a guest at our meeting. The SLT asked her to come to our meeting as a follow-up to the meeting we had with her earlier in the school year to discuss parents' perception that West Meck does not provide the same kind of world languages program as South Meck and to discuss CMS' plans for assigning the Chinese program for high school. Ms. C-H reminded the SLT that the School Board generally votes on a slate of programs for the following school year in November. Ms. Craven-Howell is working to improve this process, allowing more time for communication with parents and preparing for the annual Options Fair in January. The goal is to move the vote to September 2014. The Transformation Office is also moving to a more rubric-based decision process on program offerings and location, including but not limited to the following: enrollment numbers, building space, financial considerations, and Staff and Leadership considerations.

Waddell SLT presented information on the program offerings at South Meck and West Meck and has requested equitable access for all students. The SLT reiterated that an informal parent survey showed parents' first choice for all students is South Meck. Parents generally do not support a k-12 immersion/world languages program. Ms. C-H asked that parents provide information regarding the kind of experience they want for their kids' world languages high school experience to help CMS staff form their Board recommendations. The SLT provided an extensive list (focused on higher level non-language courses, total number of AP classes, and extra-curricular activities) and agreed with Ms C-H that a parent meeting or two with her this summer would help ensure CMS has a good understanding of what's important to our parents and why those things are important. (Why we want what we want will be important.) Meeting dates will be proposed soon.

Japanese Program: Immersion Model and Staffing for all Language Programs at Waddell

The recent advocacy surrounding removal of CMS-sponsored visas for foreign-born teachers brought to the forefront the issue of the immersion model for Japanese 4th and 5th grades. Parents from the Japanese Immersion program raised concerns about the 50/50 immersion model currently in place at those grades. Students in grades 4 and 5 spend a day with the English-speaking teacher and then trade-off the next day with the Japanese-speaking teacher.

A brief history of the Japanese program was outlined with a more detailed history to be prepared and shared with Japanese parents as well as in the forums for general parent knowledge.

While all language programs at Waddell strive to be the fullest immersion model possible, various constraints force the staff to evaluate and make intentional decisions regarding

curriculum delivery: What to teach in which language?" Two constraints include:

1. Teacher Availability

Having both a "clear opening" (confirmed teacher vacancy) and a "qualified or qualifiable candidate" in late fall through early spring when the school does its hiring for the following year.

The decision to move to 50/50 was made in Spring 2012 for SY 2012-2013, and continued in SY 2013-2014, due to continued unavailability of a high quality Japanese immersion teacher candidate for either one of those school years. The decision was not made lightly and was made as late in the Spring of 2013 as possible.

The new district policy of allowing "lateral entry" candidates at the elementary-school level has produced two potential Japanese candidates for SY14-15, but there is no corresponding vacancy. The English-speaking teacher is doing her job well and therefore cannot be displaced to hire a Japanese speaking teacher. Also, there is no growth in the program to drive an additional teacher allotment.

It was and is understood that it's difficult to move to a higher immersion percentage once the 50/50 model is in place; however, it is not impossible. Japanese-parent concerns are being heard and this issue will remain on the SLT slate going forward. The hope is that SY15-16 will provide all the necessary factors: clear vacancy, qualified candidates, and within the hiring time frame.

Further discussion revolved around continuously identifying potential candidates through parent contacts, through a newly-hired HR employee who may have Asian contacts via previous employment, and a better general knowledge in HR of Waddell's needs and the time-line needed for hiring internationally. Also important to note is that Teaching Interns are always welcome. They "self-select" to Waddell, serve as a source of native-speaking instruction or differentiation, and there is no limit to the number of Interns Waddell may host.

2. Curriculum Delivery – Language Choices and Decisions

With respect to the choice of language for curriculum delivery, all public schools must teach the NC curriculum. Waddell must be very intentional and results-driven about what to teach in which language. The NC "Read to Achieve" law requiring all third grade students to be on grade level combined with the move to full implementation of the Common Core Standards and the associated testing requirements (in English for both and especially for Science and Social

Studies) along with teacher evaluations tied to the testing necessitated a review in 2013: What needs to be taught in English to meet the requirements?

While not specifically shared at the SLT meeting, the following chart was developed..... and provides the minutes taught in English vs. the target language (L2) for all grade levels and in all languages. Including the English Block for K-2 Chinese and Japanese (required to learn the English alphabet) and the 3rd grade Block for all languages (the year students begin formal English Literacy instruction) and out of a 360-minute instructional day, the percentage of English vs. L2 is:

	Japanese	Chinese	French & German
K	* 80 / 22%	80 / 22%	40 / 11%
1-2	195 / 54%	195 / 54%	150 / 42%
3	170 / 47%	170 / 47%	170 / 47%
4-5	210 / 58%	190 / 53%	190 / 53%

(* Minutes of English / % of Instructional Day)

The chart demonstrates that none of the languages from 3-5th grade are a full immersion model or even 80/20. The advantage, however, of the native-speaker or near-native speaker teacher is being able to add vocabulary throughout the day and, as stated before, it is the intention of staff and the SLT to continue to strive to move the Japanese program away from the "official 50/50 model" and to a qualified Japanese-speaking teacher.