

Metuchen Public Schools
World Language Task Force
October 2014 – February 2015
Final Report

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Participants

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Lea Lanton (Board of Ed, Parent)

Angelika Lignell (Community, Parent)

Aileen McGuire (Board of Ed, Parent)

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Michael Stern (Board of Ed, Parent)

District Administrators:

Vincent Caputo, Superintendent

Richard Cohen, Assistant Superintendent

Edward Porowski, Principal, Campbell School

Kathryn Glutz, Principal, Edgar Middle School

Bruce Peragallo, Principal, Metuchen High School

The Task

A directive was issued by the Board of Education and Superintendent of Metuchen District Public Schools to convene a committee of interested parties and review the findings of a 2012-2013 World Language Task Force, create a new survey for parents and students, and present an update and recommendations to the administration and Board of Education.

The following information is presented herewith:

1. The Current Program
2. The Survey Results – Parents, Students
3. Recommendations, with considerations

The Process

A call for members was issued through the media, announcements on the district website, flyers to parents and students through building announcements, and announcements at the Board of Education meetings.

The World Language Task Force met four times on the following dates:

October 19—The October meeting centered on introducing the members, and discussing the expectations for the task force.

Our discussion centered on three questions:

1. What kinds of evidence will inform stakeholders that a program is one of high-quality?
2. What does it look like as students advance toward meeting their goals?
3. What does it look like when students have reached their goals and attained the desired result, that is, what should they understand, know, and be able to do?

November 19—November meeting centered on the following:

1. Grades 6/7 alternate cycle language learning.
2. AP Designations – discussion on identifying advanced students early on to move them through the levels and language study and prepare them for the work in AP courses.
3. Discussion regarding selection of French, German & Spanish in Grade 7 instead of Grade 8 to give students an extra year of focused study.
4. Skyping – there was discussion of the use of technology, not only to skype to the target language country, but to other schools around NJ.
5. Survey – Looking over the 2012-13 World Language Task Force survey to create a new one.

January 21—Discussion on the survey results from Edgar & MHS

February 5—Meeting of World Language Teachers – teachers were presented with the current offerings. Discussion and recommendations regarding the amount of time spent in early years.

Meetings with Campbell & Edgar principals regarding scheduling.

February 19—Review of the current World Language Offerings and scheduling throughout the district.

Survey to Campbell & Moss Parents through Google Forms.

Formulation of Recommendations

Current Program

Moss Kindergarten

There is a curriculum, written in 2005, to be followed by the Kindergarten teachers. There is no set time for Spanish instruction.

Campbell

Grades 1, 2, 3: Spanish 10x/year – a cycle course (part of Computers, Enrichment, Spanish cycles), class occurs once every 6 days for one cycle.

Grade 4: Spanish 30x/year – once every 6 days

Edgar

Grade 5: Spanish instruction once a week

Grade 6 & 7: Spanish is a semester course on alternating cycles; currently Grade 6 alternates with Life Studies and Grade 7 alternates with Reading/Writing Workshop

Grade 8: Student choice of Spanish, French or German/Full Year

MHS

Spanish, French and German: Levels 1-5
Spanish 1 & 2/In Class Support
Spanish Communications and Cultures 1 & 2
Spanish, French, German: Levels 4 & 5 Honors
Spanish Communications 4/5
Spanish 5 AP Literature & Culture
Italian Independent Study
Online Language Learning via VHS (Virtual High School)

Clubs:

World Language Honor Societies
World Language Clubs: Spanish, German, French & Italian
Multi-Cultural Club

World Travel Opportunities

Graduation Requirements: The Metuchen Public School District has a two-year world language graduation requirement, which exceeds the New Jersey State requirement of one year. To satisfy the district requirement, two years of study of the same language must be completed.

Surveys

The committee reviewed the surveys completed from the first World Language Task Force. Similar questions were developed to gain insight into the thinking of parents and students with regard to World Language study.

"The World Language Task Force requests your answers to a survey regarding world language study in Metuchen.

The student survey can be found in Naviance Family Connection:
<http://connection.naviance.com/metuchen> >>About Me Tab>>Surveys to take

The parent survey can be found in the Genesis Parent Portal:
<https://parents.genesisedu.com/metuchen/parents> >> Forms tab"

Parents at Campbell and Moss Schools were surveyed through Google Forms.

396 Responses were received from parents.



K:42	Grade 7: 34
Grade 1: 42	Grade 8: 35
Grade 2: 33	Grade 9: 32
Grade 3: 30	Grade 10: 19
Grade 4: 29	Grade 11: 18
Grade 5: 38	Grade 12: 12
Grade 6: 32	

Do you speak a language other than English?

200 Yes

196 No

What language:

Albanian, Arabic, Bulgarian, Cantonese, Chinese, Danish; Filipino , French, German, Gujarati, Hebrew, Hindi, Hungarian, Italian, Japanese, Konkani, Korean, Lithuanian, Mandarin, Marathi, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian,

Russian, Sinhalese, Spanish, Tagalog, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Turkish, Ukranian, Urdu, Visayan

Does your child study language outside of the school district?

70 Yes

326 No

Do you and your family visit relatives/friends in a country where another language is spoken?

164 Yes

232 No

I believe it is important for my child to have opportunities to begin learning a new language prior to entering middle school

358 Yes

38 No

Which languages would you like to see offered in the Metuchen School System (Multiple answers were accepted):

Spanish: 242

Mandarin/Chinese: 157

French: 140

American Sign Language: 101

Italian: 102

German: 83

Latin: 71

Japanese: 60

Arabic: 30

Hindi/Urdu: 38

Russian: 26

Other: Tagalog, Portuguese

Other Comments regarding language offerings in Metuchen:

All have a value in today's world. All have a value.

All of these languages have a benefit but offering eastern languages would give a significant advantage as it relates to future world economies

All please.

American Sign Language, German-beginning, etc., Mandarin, Spanish (I know is and should remain), Latin - everyone benefits from this, forgive my editorial comments :)

French, Spanish, American Sign Language. I am only choosing a few as I think it would not be practical for a small school system to have too many languages even though many of these would also be good choices.

I prefer Spanish because of its usefulness in USA.

I want my child to be able to study German starting in 5th grade. I also want her to be able to start learning Latin. I know it's taught through a virtual high school but I think it deserves having an instructor. Latin helps students significantly with their vocabulary.

Spanish and Hindi should be mandatory for our area starting in kindergarten. Then every language you mentioned here should be offered.

Spanish, Italian, Japanese, Mandarin Chinese, Arabic; I think that an online component would be a realistic extender (to offer more variety) for our small school district.

The standard Spanish, French, & German are fine. Perhaps a language like Mandarin or Japanese would make sense. Also, it would be great to have the kids/family select a language.

Do you feel there is a benefit to studying languages via virtual high school, online language programs?

166 No

66 Yes

Many Moss & Campbell parents are not familiar with the program.



Students were asked through Naviance to respond to the following survey. 85 Responses were received from Students.

Please check the school you are currently attending	Which grades:
Edgar Middle School : 25	8 -- 25
Metuchen High School: 60	9 -- 13
	10 -- 17
	11 -- 15
	12 -- 15

Do you know all of the World Language courses available for you in school?

Yes—79

No—6

Do you speak a language other than English?

Yes—34

No—51

Would you like to have more opportunities in school and in the community to speak other languages?

Yes—65

No—20

How do you choose which language to study? (Student could choose more than one answer)

Family background – 28

Friends and neighbors speak the language – 11

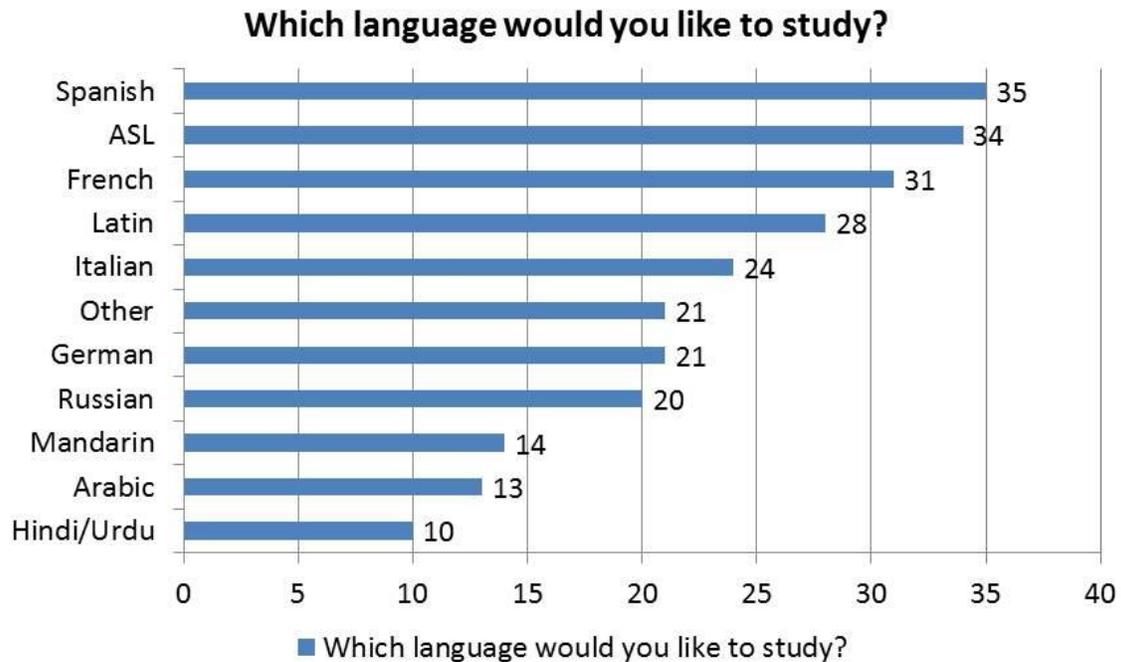
Friends are enrolling in the language – 25

Job opportunities of a specific language – 34

Parent preference – 14

Student Survey

Which languages would you like to study?



Why do you want to study a language? (Students could choose more than one answer)

- I like learning about other cultures and languages—44
- I think knowing other languages will help me get a good job—43
- I think World Language is important—39
- I think World Language is important to get into a good college—32
- I can get in touch with my roots and speak with family members—23
- I need 2 years of World Language credits and I'm done—16

Would you like to study multiple World Languages?

- Yes—52
- No—33

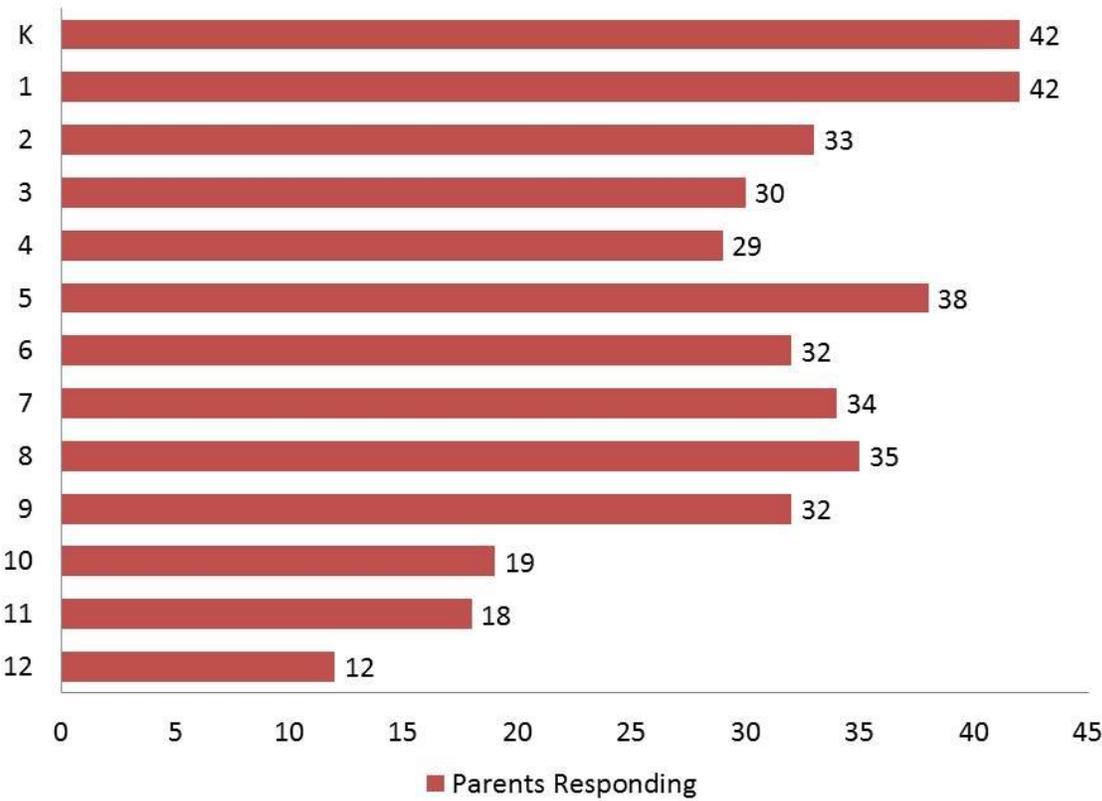
Would you be comfortable learning a new language online?

- Yes—51
- No—34

Recommendations

The surveys provided the committee with stakeholder input to consider in our recommendations. Meetings were also held with the teachers and principals to discuss current schedules and offerings, and to discover the considerations or obstacles in implementing our recommendations.

Parent’s survey results:



The “Current Program” chart is presented below with added columns indicating our recommendations and considerations. Following that is the overview for our recommendations.

Current	Recommendations	Considerations
<p>Moss Kindergarten There is a curriculum to follow by the Kindergarten teachers at their discretion and available time.</p>	<p>WL Faculty would like to see a certified staff teach once a week, similar to the current schedules of Art & Music</p>	<p>Staffing – Teacher certified in Spanish, 1 day a week</p>
<p>Campbell Grades 1, 2, 3: Spanish 10x/year – a cycle course (part of Computers, Enrichment, Spanish cycles), class occurs once every 6 days for one cycle. Grade 4: Spanish 30x/year – once every 6 days</p>	<p>Originally, Grades 3 & 4 studied Spanish 30x/year with no Grades 1 & 2 World Language. For now, retain. Future recommendation would be to re-instate Grade 3 Spanish 30x/year. Retain</p>	<p>The Campbell 6-day schedule is working through its first year. The schedule needs to work through two years before looking at areas to change. Spanish became part of the cycle courses so that Campbell could add Computers and an enrichment course.</p>
<p>Edgar Grade 5: Spanish instruction once a week Grade 6 & 7: Spanish is a semester course on alternating cycles; currently Grade 6 alternates with Life Studies and Grade 7 alternates with Reading/Writing Workshop Grade 8: Student choice of Spanish, French or German/Full Year</p>	<p>Grade 5: Retain Grade 6: For consistency in language learning, we recommend the study of language across the entire year, rather than alternating cycles. Grade 7 & 8: If the District has an interest in creating the AP French and German courses at the High School, we recommend that students choose their language in Grade 7 rather than 8 to accommodate an extra year of study in the target language.</p>	<p>Grade 6: Recommendation to pilot the A&B daily schedule, rather than alternating cycles, beginning with the 2015-16 school year. We will re-visit this pilot as the year progresses and make recommendations for the continuation of the A/B schedule in Grade 7. For students to choose a language other than Spanish in Grade 7, additional staffing would be needed = 1 additional French and German class</p>

<p>MHS Spanish, Levels 1-3 Spanish 1 & 2/In Class Support Spanish Communications and Cultures 1 & 2 Spanish 4 Honors Spanish Communications 4/5 Spanish 5 AP Literature & Culture Italian Independent Studies Online Language Learning via VHS (Virtual High School) – all languages available</p>	<p>Spanish: Currently, our students split into two tracks at Levels 4 & 5. We recommend that the tracks split earlier, thereby retaining more students and preparing them for one of two exams, based on their language strengths. Track 1 leads to the AP Literature & Culture Exam –Spanish 3 Honors, Spanish 4 Honors, AP 5 Spanish. This track is designed for those students who have strengths in the reading and writing of the Spanish language. Track 2 leads to the AP Language & Culture Exam --Spanish 3 Communications, Spanish 4 Communications, Spanish 5 Communications. This track is designed for those students who have strengths in the speaking and listening elements of the Spanish language.</p>	<p>We will propose a course addition next year to the Curriculum Committee that will split the tracks at an earlier level to retain students in the program and prepare them for the appropriate AP exams. We believe Spanish 3 is the level to split.</p>
<p>French & German, Levels 1-3 French & German, 4 & 5 Honors</p>	<p>Our recommendation is to retain current levels. However, if the district wishes to add French & German AP – our recommendation is to change the Grade 8 requirement of selecting a language to Grade 7, in order to give students an extra year of work, preparing them for the rigors of AP coursework and exam.</p>	<p>Currently, both teachers for French & German carry 5 classes. Extra courses would require staffing and scheduling changes. FRENCH: EDGAR: French 1 – teacher shared with Social Studies MHS: French 1, French 2 (2 sections), French 3, combined French 4/5 Honors GERMAN: German 1 (only at Edgar), German 2, 3, 4 Honors, 5 Honors</p>

Italian Independent Study	Students select this independent study during their lunch hours to work through topics in the Italian language. Student population varies, but averages 15 per year.	If the district wishes to add a language to its current choice of Spanish, French or German, there may be interest in developing the Independent Study into a full-fledged course. Additional staffing would be necessary.
VHS (Virtual High School) language courses	Continue to publicize and afford students the opportunity to study language through online programming. Languages offered include: Italian, Latin, Mandarin, Portuguese and Russian (in addition to Spanish, French and German)	

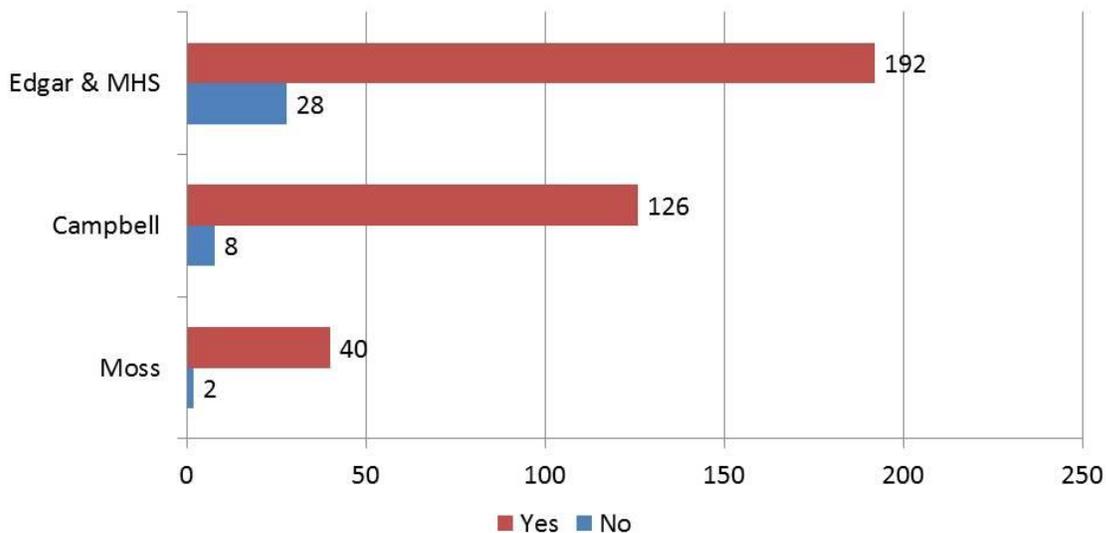
OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS		
CHINESE:	The Parent Survey indicated an interest in starting a Chinese language program. The study of this language should begin early.	Proposal: partner with one of the Chinese schools in Edison – have a once a week after-school program at Campbell. In this way we have the chance to start children early, with an established program, and see whether there is an interest in the community. The program would be evaluated every year and student progress tracked. As the program develops over the years, the district will have the data necessary to decide if and when it is time to formally place the Chinese language into our curriculum.
AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE	The Student Survey showed a high number of students interested in learning American Sign Language. This is timely, since a bill has passed the NJ Senate and is currently in the NJ Assembly Higher Education Committee (as of 2/5). This Bill would recognize American Sign Language as a World Language, meeting the requirements for the graduation.	Proposal: explore the option of adding a two-year ASL curriculum for MHS to fulfill the graduation requirements for World Language. This would require staffing and curriculum. Ocean City NJ High School offers ASL 1 & 2 and ASL Independent Study. They use a text entitled “Master ASL!”
SUMMER LANGUAGE PROGRAM OPTIONS	We have two recommendations: 1. If the STREAM is offered 3 days a week, we could offer a Language or Cultural option for the other 2 days. 2. Partner with Metuchen Recreation for a Summer Language Camp.	A committee must be formed to explore these options and create/run the program.

Overview

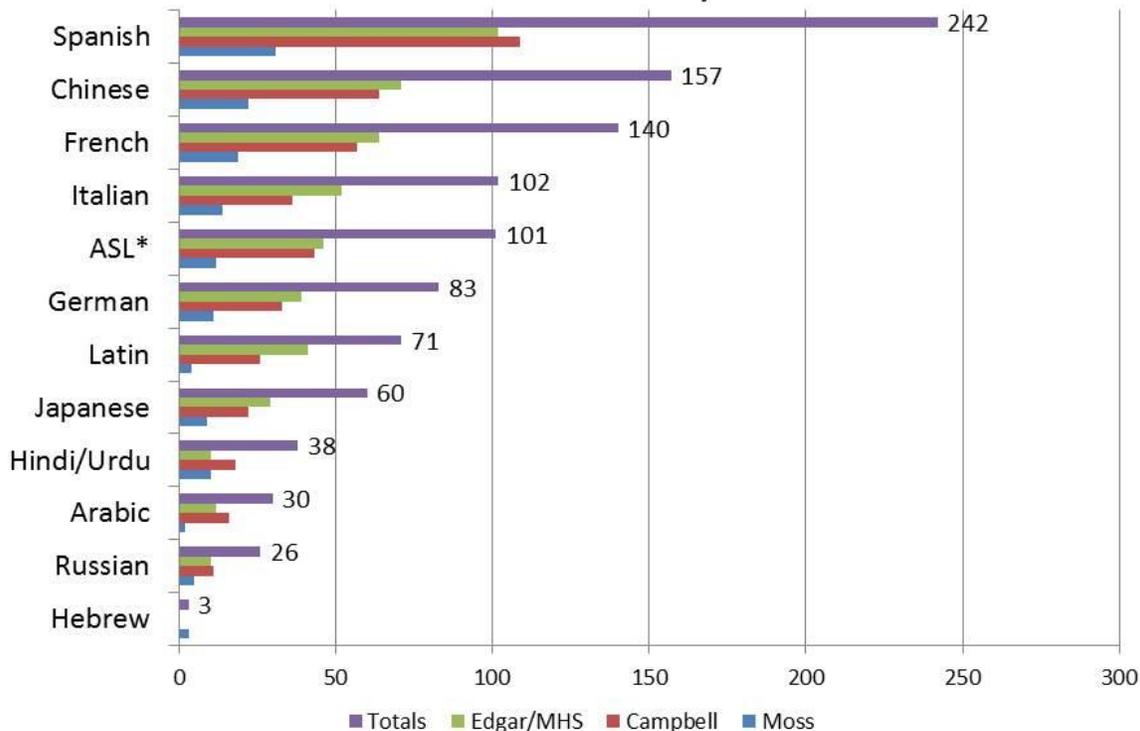
This aim of this Task Force was to provide data, suggestions and topics of discussion that can be used by the District Administrators in planning and updating the World Language Program.

On the survey, parents were asked to respond to a statement, “I believe it is important for my child(ren) to have opportunities to begin learning a new language prior to entering middle school”. Out of the 400 parents who responded to the survey, 362 answered yes. This prompted us to look at our current offerings at Moss and Campbell. Our recommendation is to increase the instruction time for Spanish at both schools. However, we recognize that other considerations have to be made. For instance, our recommendation to place Spanish instruction into Moss similar to the instruction for Art and Music (once a week) would require staffing and an adjustment to instruction time in other areas. However, it is clear that this is an area that has parental support and should be a part of the overall World Language Dialogue.

I believe it is important for my child(ren) to have opportunities to begin learning a new language prior to entering middle school.



Which languages would you like to see offered in the Metuchen School System?



*American Sign Language

A new 6-day rotation schedule was implemented at Campbell for the 2014-15 year. Previously, Spanish was a once-a-week lesson for 3rd and 4th graders only. For the 2014-15 year, Spanish was included as a cycle course in grades 1, 2 and 3. And, Spanish for grade 4 was placed on the 6-Day Rotation for the entire year. The Task Force recommends that the World Language offerings be re-visited when the 6-day schedule has had a chance to work through a few years.

The survey indicated that parents are interested in adding Chinese as a language offering. The recommendation by the World Language Task Force is to partner with a Chinese language school and offer instruction as an after-school program once-a-week at the Campbell School. We believe that the study of Chinese Language instruction should begin early. By suggesting this program of after-school instruction, we can keep the program going as long as there is interest. For those students who continue year after year, we will offer the program as students

move to Edgar and then re-evaluate the program as the students reach high school. At that point, we will have enough data to determine program viability.

At Edgar, the issue for the World Language Task Force was the alternating cycles in Grades 6 & 7. The Task Force recommends that instruction take place on a continuous line throughout the year, creating an A/B schedule with Life Studies and Spanish in Grade 6, and Reading/Writing Workshop and Spanish in Grade 7. No change in staffing will be required.

There was also some discussion regarding the grade in which a student could choose a language. Currently, students choose Spanish, French or German in the 8th grade. If the students were to choose their language in grade 7, the extra year of study might prompt students to stay in the language program longer in high school, and in the case of French and German, would provide increased language development necessary for the upper levels of language. If the district decides to allow students to choose a language at Grade 7, staffing and scheduling would have to be addressed.

The World Language Task Force had several suggestions for the High School languages. There is a recommendation to split the Spanish language into two tracks beginning at Level 3. Students who have a strong literary bent would move to Spanish 3 Honors and Spanish 4 Honors and then AP Spanish 5, leading to the Spanish Literature and Culture Exam. Students who were stronger in the areas of speaking and writing would move through Spanish 3 Communications, Spanish 4 Communications, and Spanish 5 Communications, all leading to the Spanish Language and Culture Exam. The Spanish faculty also believes that splitting the track at Level 3 would keep some students in the program longer, especially for those students stronger in speaking/writing rather than literary/analytical. This creation of two tracks would not involve additional staffing.

Our current High School World Language offerings include French & German Honors classes but no AP offerings. The recommendations of the previous task force included this statement: “It may be a prudent decision to reconsider this designation (AP) on a year by year basis and consistently work towards continuing to infuse AP materials into each course, and encouraging students to take the AP exams.” The current Task Force agrees with this statement – See chart below.

Student Enrollment 2014-15	Projected 2015-16 enrollment	
French 1: 36 French 2: 40 French 3: 25 French 4 Honors: 12 French 5 Honors: 11	French 1: 48 French 2: 34 French 3: 36 French 4 Honors: 20 French 5 Honors: 8	2014-15: French 1 is offered at Edgar and at the High School. The French 2 class has a high enrollment. If the numbers continue to remain high, additional staffing will be required. Staffing will also be required if the decision for student language selection moves to 7 th grade.
German 1: 19 German 2: 7 German 3: 11 German 4 Honors: 12 German 5 Honors: 10	German 1: 27 German 2: 19 German 3: 8 German 4 Honors: 7 German 5 Honors: 6	Currently, German 1 is only offered at Edgar. The German language program is strengthening its curriculum and numbers. The numbers should begin to grow in the early levels of German.

**Figures will be available in April when Edgar Students make their choice of World Language.*

Additional Recommendations:

Two languages were highly recommended by the parents in our survey: Italian & American Sign Language. Italian language is currently offered as an independent study. The course attracts between 10-15 students each year. If the district wished to add it to the curriculum as a two-year language course, staffing would be required.

At this time, there is a bill passed by the NJ Senate and in committee for the Assembly to allow the study of American Sign Language count towards World Language Graduation Requirements. Given the high number of parents and students interested in this language, our recommendation is to explore the option of adding a two year ASL curriculum.

The World Language Task Force discussed the exploration of language learning outside of the traditional school day. One of the suggestions was to set up summer study. The recommendation is to form a committee of interested parties to explore and create/run the program and partner with Metuchen Recreation to implement.