

## **Elementary World Languages FAQ**

### **What is the goal of the program?**

The goal of the program is to enable students to graduate with high-intermediate or low-advanced proficiency in a second language.

### **What is the focus of the program? What will students learn?**

The elementary program's focus is on listening and speaking. Students will learn academic language that coincides with the content of their other classes so that the experience becomes more immersive. As students move into the middle and high school levels of language instruction, there will be a growing focus on balancing the reading and writing components of language proficiency with the conversational piece.

### **Why only one language? Why Spanish?**

To select which languages to introduce to elementary students, we considered a wide variety of factors, including sustainability, access to curricular support and availability of highly-qualified teachers. Currently, we are able to sustain only Spanish instruction for Grades K-12. Spanish is the most widely-instituted language in elementary schools nationally. Teaching Spanish across the district is also a great way to assure equity and access and makes staffing and program assessment manageable.

### **Aren't we starting too late if our elementary program begins with Grade 4?**

While there are documented benefits to starting language instruction in elementary school, there are few studies that describe when in elementary school to start. For our system, starting in Grade 4 allows us to build carefully and deliberately, while giving future students a three-year head-start on current students who started learning a second language, at the earliest, in Grade 7.

### **Won't English Language Arts (ELA) scores drop if time is carved out for another language?**

No. Studies have shown a correlation between second-language study and improved achievement on state standardized tests and the SAT, especially for those who scored the lowest on the PSAT. Studies have linked the study of a second language to improved cognitive functioning across a host of measures, including the enhancement of English vocabulary and understanding of grammatical structures and language functions. All of this indicates that, at the very least, the inclusion of an elementary language program will have no effect on reading scores and, more likely, will help students achieve on their reading tests.

### **Will students who fall behind or students who come from another school district need tutoring to catch up with their peers?**

No. Our program is designed for students to acquire language at their own pace. The online component of the program is available 24/7 – even over the summer – for students to explore at their leisure, if interested. Our middle school and high school language programs will accommodate all levels of language-learning.