

Parent Questions for 3/13 Principal Tea

If it is possible, could you please share the current 7th grade and 6 grade students' assessment results through ACTFL as indicated on Tillicum site that the middle school program benchmarked and accessed by ACTFL?

The 6th and 7th grade Chinese TRC BOY results along with the entry testing level were sent home with a letter of explanation of the test. The reading expectation for middle school Chinese Dual Language is Intermediate High and in iChineseReader's TRC, that is equivalent to 14-17. This does NOT mean that students are only restricted to levels 14-17 equivalent reading materials, as we understand that there is always a range of strengths in any class. The reason why the expectation is at Intermediate High for reading throughout middle school is based on research and collaboration opportunities with other programs and teachers in Washington, Utah, Minnesota, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Oregon. Various research done by scholars such as Thomas and Collier, Fortune, Burkehauser, Steele, and more have consistently shown that students accelerate and advance through Novice Low to Intermediate Low quickly and that once students reach Intermediate Mid, it can take up to a few years to advance to the next proficiency level.

ACTFL does not post individual program results through their website.

Could you please also share the example of the current 7th grade and 6 grade students' Chinese honor social study project write ups or final reports and the examples of Chinese language art reading and writing samples.

Yes, these will be shown during the principal tea.

How do I review the middle school Mandarin curriculum for the 6th and 7th grades?

For secondary curriculum information, parents and guardians are able to see the description of the courses through the course catalogue and various curriculum and student work through the child's One Note notebook. Information is also shared during curriculum night and 6th grade parent information night. Please note that the usage of One Note is different from teacher to teacher and that some teachers prefer passing out hard copies of work or lessons instead. For social studies, the Chinese DL Program follows the BSD 6th and 7th grade curriculum with additional supplemental texts incorporated to reinforce language and literacy skills. For language arts, the program works closely with the English Curriculum Developer in ensuring that we are aligned with CCSS standards in addition to ACTFL standards, and that we are bridging between the English and Mandarin language arts to allow students utilize prior knowledge and transfer of the content and language skill knowledge between the two languages.

What tests will be used to assess MS student progress and how often will they be administered?

K-8 Chinese DL uses Chinese TRC in testing reading fluency, accuracy, and comprehension. While in K-5, students are assessed twice a year, in middle school, students will be assessed three times a year at beginning of the year, middle of the year, and end of the year. Before students exit the middle school program, they will take STAMP 4S, a computer-based Mandarin proficiency assessment, in 8th grade. The score will determine students' qualification in earning the Seal of Biliteracy in middle school. We will be piloting STAMP 4S at the end of 6th grade this year as well to collect baseline data of the middle school

program in consideration of a more accurate understanding of the impact of program model change and the decrease in language exposure, so we are able to further improve the curriculum and instruction.

How will the 6th grade teacher ensure that more advanced students continue to be challenged?

- **Tasks:** For students of approaching levels, they will be assigned tasks with more scaffolding supports. For students of at or beyond grade level, they will have more challenging tasks when they complete the required ones.
- **Differentiated Reading Groups:** At the beginning of the school year, students are grouped into different reading groups based on their reading levels with TRC data and my observation. Students of different reading groups will read books of different levels.
- **Collaboration Groups:** In terms of group work in classes, students are grouped according to their proficiency levels. In each group, there are students who are beyond grade level, at grade level, and approaching level.
- **Multiple Intelligent Instructional Activities:** different students have different learning styles; for instance, some are more visual learners while some are more logical learners. In my Chinese Language Arts and Social studies classes, I use multiple intelligent instructional activities to help each and every student achieve the learning goals.

Who will the 6th grade teacher be?

That is still to be determined. The teacher will be highly qualified.

Who provides the MS Mandarin teachers with performance reviews? If it is the principal, how will he assess the Mandarin instruction?

Comprehensive performance reviews and evaluations are conducted by a building administrators using the state adopted framework.

Is there an opportunity to meet with families of MS Mandarin DLP to learn about their experiences during 6th and 7th grades?

This would need to be arranged by PTA or parents, independent of the school. New 6th grade students have the opportunity to participate in our 6th grade WEB orientation (date TBD) prior to the start of school. They will be matched with 8th grade mentors, meet other students, get a tour of the campus, and learn what the transition to middle school is like.

How many kids are expected to be in each 6th grade Mandarin classroom?

That number will depend upon how many students move up from Jing Mei. Target class sizes are 24-28 students. Our current class sizes for MDL are:

- 6th grade- 23 students
- 7th grade- 15 students

How many periods and in which classes Chinese is taught in middle school and also in high school?

There are two periods taught in Mandarin in the middle school pathway—language arts and social studies. For high school, student will have the option of AP courses, in consistent with the ISA program in high school, as we do expect student to reach the AP language levels by high school.

What is the Chinese language progression looking like from 6th-12th grade? In other words, do kids take AP Chinese Language? What grade level?

For 6-8, the Mandarin DL pathway consists of social studies and language arts in Mandarin. The Mandarin language arts does not replace English language arts—students will take the grade level appropriate English language arts. Social studies will be taught in Mandarin using the BSD social studies curriculum.

In consistent with the ISA Program in high school, a similar pathway is in planning, where AP is available to 9th grade students.

Is there an opportunity for students in high school to take something like Chinese for business language?

In considering the language expectation trajectory and student data, we do plan on having courses that partner with the larger Seattle/Bellevue communities in ensuring that students have the opportunities to use the language in a relevant and meaningful way. We anticipate that in partnering with local Chinese organizations in our communities with various projects and hands-on experiences, students will be learning some professional or business language.

Do you know which high school Jing Mei students will go to?

The Growth and Planning Committee is currently in the process of planning the DL high school pathway, considering several factors, including parent and community feedback. When the designated high school has been identified, the district will be sharing the details with the community.

- a. Is there, or can there be, additional help for non-native Chinese speakers at Tillicum? Something more structured than the 30 minute 'drop in' tutorial from 2:30-3pm?
- b. I know mandarin speaking parents at Jing Mei are agitating for more English time, but if the immersion program is going to flourish as a school for all students instead of just Chinese students, extra Mandarin time for non-Chinese students should be offered. Is anything like this being contemplated or planned for?

It is difficult to predict and respond to hypothetical situations. We will continue to assess the effectiveness of the program using research based assessments (STAMPS 4S) and adjust as needed. For individual students we work to support and partner with families as an important part of that work. We have provided a Mandarin speaking teaching assist to support the program 1 hour/day.

A struggle our Middle Schooler is having (we knew it would come up) is being limited in her electives as an incoming 7th grader.

a. She has asked me if one of her Chinese classes could be a zero hour. Do you know if there's zero hour classes in middle school or if it's a possibility?

b. Is there some way DL students can take the STEM classes in middle school they need to access higher level STEM classes in high school? She is going to ask her counselor about a waiver for PE, as a multi-sport athlete, but I am not sure the school has a policy for this.

Students in our DL program have the same opportunity to take choice electives as all students. While it is true that the Language class takes one elective place, it is also true that most Tillicum students, well over 70%) take a world language course as an elective and therefore have similar constraints regarding their other elective choices.

One semester of PE is required in 6th, 7th, and 8th grade. Additionally, one semester of Health is required in 7th grade. One semester of CTE is also required, as is one year of performing/visual arts. These are standard district requirements and there are no provisions for waiving them- this is not expected to change in the foreseeable future. We are proud of our focus on academics and language learning, and the robust slate of electives students can choose from.

1) Curriculum– How is this developed for each grade level? How much time is put in to create a brand-new Mandarin curriculum for each grade level? I have heard there is little to no additional time added for creating this curriculum from a standard English language program – is this true and if so why not? Is the curriculum reviewed yearly to adjust as necessary? What is the criteria for adjustment?

The curriculum is developed through consultation and collaboration with the MS Chinese DL teacher, English and social studies curriculum developers, and the world language and Spanish DL developers. From when Ms. Hu was the confirmed teacher for MS Chinese DL in May of 2017 to the end of this school year, there was more than 160 hours of curriculum release set aside for curriculum planning before, during, and after the school year, in addition to teacher contracted planning time. The 6th and 7th grade CLA DO NOT use the same materials as 6th and 7th grade ELA. We do, however, align the standards in a way where both CCSS from ELA for best practice of any language arts class and ACTFL for any target language course are used in building up the curriculum for MS Chinese DL. The curriculum is reviewed at each curriculum release throughout the year, as well as before and after each school year. When adjusting any lesson or curriculum, we analyze a variety of student performance data, consult with other teachers and curriculum developers, discuss community and stakeholder feedback, revisit expected student outcomes, standards, and expectations, examine any inequities within the lessons or curriculum, and evaluate the alignment of the curriculum with the district's vision, mission, and initiatives.

2) Materials– I am concerned about materials for this program and what is provided to/for the children. One such example is for the novel study, which I have been told has had issues in previous years where books were not ordered or available for the children in time. Are materials looked at and ordered in advance of the school year? Who oversees ordering and selecting materials for this program? With Social Studies being such a rich and complicated subject, what type of support (in terms of materials) do you provide the children while learning this topic in Mandarin?

The book that you might be referring to was *Around the World in 80 Days*. With the adoption of One Note, the original plan was distributing the digital copy of the book to each student through each student's One Note. However, upon evaluation of student needs and building reading skills in the 21st century, hard copies of the books were then ordered for the students. All books are provided by the program and we have not had another situation like this after the initial evaluation of hard copy vs. digital.

For social studies, we have found various authentic materials to ensure that we are closely following the social studies curriculum—these include books, news articles, research articles that also integrate language arts standards and themes as part of best practice of thematic units.

4) **Assessments**— From the open house, it is my understanding that the students take a standardized Chinese assessment at the end of 5th grade, and then aside from using iChinese Reader, the students are not assessed again during the middle school years. Why is this? Will this change?

This information is incorrect. Students take the Chinese TRC three times a year—beginning, middle, and end of the year, at each grade level. Students will also take the STAMP 4S in 8th grade, which will also be a tool for students to earn the Seal of Biliteracy. This year, we are piloting STAMP 4S at the end of 6th grade to collect baseline data of the middle school program in consideration of a more accurate understanding of the impact of program model change and the decrease in language exposure, so we are able to further improve the curriculum and instruction.

5) **Teacher**—Why isn't there a lead teacher for this program with long term Mandarin teaching and curriculum experience? There will be an additional 2 classes joining the program for 2019-2020, will an additional teacher be added to the program? In order to maintain consistency across BMDL program, it would be ideal to have a teacher from Jing Mei move up to teach the incoming 6th graders for 2019-2020. Why type of support does the current teacher (and future teachers) receive from the school and the BDML program?

We hire the best and most suitable teacher from the pool of candidates. The current teacher was an intern at Jing Mei Elementary and trained there prior to the hire of Tillicum, and is familiar with dual language programs in general as well as Jing Mei's philosophy and model.

There will be an additional teacher hired for the program. All potential positions at the Bellevue School District are grounded in equal opportunities for everyone and we follow an equitable procedure in processing all applicants. We are in the process of advertising the position to ensure we have a large pool of candidates and will follow the standard BSD process in interviewing and selecting a teacher.

The current teacher receives support from the Chinese DL curriculum developer, the World Language curriculum developer, an instructional mentor, the building World Language leader, the building principal, and the Jing Mei teacher community (for professional developments). Depending on the new hired teacher, the teacher will receive support from all the parties above, with the exception of an instructional mentor as it is dependent on the teaching experience of the teacher and whether the teacher is new to the district or not.

6) **Tillicum** – From the outside and from what I have seen and heard, the BMDL program seems to be a separate entity within the entire school? It seems like the program is housed there, but not truly a part of the school. What can be done to change this and have BMDL be more a part of the school like Puesta del Sol is? Where will the 8th graders go after they finish middle school if they stay in the BMDL program?

Puesta del Sol is a full Spanish immersion elementary school. When the Puesta del Sol students graduate, they have the option of going into the ISA (International Spanish Academy) program in middle school, which is at Tillicum and has a similar program structure as Chinese DL at Tillicum. The various program students are very much part of the school and the school community, as they along with students not part of the ISA and Chinese DL programs are what make up Tillicum and what makes Tillicum a diverse and unique school.

7) **Completion**– For those children completing the program through High School, will they graduate with a dual diploma such as the students from Puesta del Sol?

Students may qualify for the Seal of Biliteracy when they graduate from any middle school dual language program based on the STAMP 4S scores, which will be recorded on students' high school transcript. Students from the ISA (International Spanish Academy) program, including students who did not attend Puesta del Sol, receive an ISA diploma since ISA is hosted and in partnership with the Ministry of Education of Spain.

-what classes/grades will the new teacher be teaching? Will the current teacher move up with her classes and teach the 7&8 graders? New teacher take 6th?

Teaching assignments will be determined when the new teacher is hired. We will consider various factors such as years of experience, past teaching experiences, and teachers' interests in placing the teachers in specific grade levels.

-How is the Social studies curriculum translated into Chinese? Will English texts be available to students also (at home of course) to ensure the Chinese is supported and that there are no gaps? How are the current grades dealing with this?

The social studies textbook itself is not translated into Chinese. After extensive conversations and learning with the social studies curriculum developer, Spanish DL developer, and Spanish teachers, who translated specific Spanish social studies materials, the recommendation was to pull authentic, language appropriate, and relevant materials that are not only aligned with the social studies topics, skills, and standards but also allows for cross-subject integration with Chinese language arts. English textbooks are available to the students in the classrooms and students continue to take the district common assessments for social studies in each grade level.

-What resources are available to students? (Books, online resources etc.). The library during our visit looked very limited, how is this being addressed?

Students have access to more than 500+ higher level Chinese books through the classrooms' collections, iChineseReader, and Joy Reader in the classrooms and at home. The BDML PTSA and WL teachers have generously donated books for the Tillicum Library. Books that were purchased with the curriculum fund are currently in the classrooms—there were at least 5-6 boxes of books that were purchased from China Sprout and Amazon China for the Chinese DL MS classroom collection.

-What levels are current students testing at? What is benchmark being used? Is this consistent with what is used at Jing Mei? (Can you explain better how students are evaluated in both schools- I know different methods have been used throughout the years).

We are seeing a range student abilities between Intermediate Low to Intermediate High. The proficiency levels from ACTFL are consistent with what Jing Mei is using as well. In both elementary and secondary, students are using Chinese TRC from iChineseReader as well as STAMP. However, instead of STAMP 4Se, secondary uses STAMP 4S, which is more suitable for secondary students with more difficult and in-depth topics for listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

-What is variability in current classes among students, has the gap narrowed between native speaking and non-native speakers?

We are seeing a range student abilities between Intermediate Low to Intermediate High. With just a year of data, it is hard to determine a trend as we are seeing that each individual student is currently growing at a different pace.

-How are classrooms split? Do you try to even out native vs non native in each class? Has the integrity of the 50/50 split between native/non native speakers been maintained as students entered middle school.

The classrooms are not split as of current—there's one class for each grade level. As students enroll up from elementary school, we will be remaining with the two-way model of native Mandarin-speaking students and students whose first language is not Mandarin when splitting classes.

I am also curious to know what level of the competency the current 7th graders are try to reach? or the graduating 8th grade class will try to reach? What level of the world language class at High School would be equivalent to the current 7th grader or 8th grade graduating class's target level? Chinese 3, Chinese 4, AP Chinese or Honor Chinese 6 (2nd year college credit) are the current Chinese Language levels at Newport High School consider the entering 9th grader students took Chinese 1A, 1B and 2 during 3 years of middle school 6, 7 & 8.

The expectations for 7th and 8th grade is that students will be at the Intermediate High to Advance Low levels in listening and speaking by the end of the school year, with Intermediate High for reading and writing. Depending on the component of comparison (listening, speaking, reading, or writing), these expectations are equivalent to Chinese 4, AP Language/Culture, Honors 6.