

REPORT

MEMORANDUM

TO: Arlington School Board

FROM: World Languages Advisory Committee (WLAC)

DATE: 3/25/2014

SUBJECT: Non – Recommending Year Report

I Introduction

The 2013/14 school year (SY) has seen significant steps forward towards the goal of achieving a fully articulated sequence of world language (WL) learning for our children. At the same time, some key links of this sequence remain broken. In our view the following four issues have been of central importance for WL education:

(i) The School Board reaffirmed its previous value statement this summer, asserting once again that all APS students should graduate with proficiency in at least two languages. This was most welcome. We also applaud the School Board for seeking a roadmap to achieve this goal (the Progressive Planning Model, PPM).¹ The WLAC is appreciative of having been given the opportunity to contribute to the development of that PPM.

(ii) We are also gratified that, at the School Board's December meeting, the rollout of the Foreign Language in the Elementary Schools (FLES) program into all of the remaining schools was established as a key priority for action². Similarly, we view the implementation of the fifth grade FLEX program this past fall as a symbolic, but nonetheless important step towards providing access to elementary world language education for all Arlington elementary school children.³

(iii) We are extremely pleased that two schools are planning to close the 6th grade gap next fall: Jefferson will offer WL to all 6th grade students. Close to submitting our

¹ See <http://www.apsva.us/cms/lib2/VA01000586/Centricity/Domain/176/2013-14/070813mi.pdf>

² Elementary schools not offering a FLES or Immersion language program are Arlington Science Focus, ATS, Hoffman-Boston, Long Branch, Nottingham, Oakridge, Taylor, Tuckahoe and Abingdon (grades 2-5).

³ The FLEX program is a Spanish program for 5th graders offered outside of the regular school day at schools that currently do not have a world language program. We will discuss FLEX in more detail in Section IV.

report, we moreover learned that Swanson plans to offer beginning WL in three languages in addition to Transitional Spanish (TS).

The WLAC, however, is unanimously disappointed that there were essentially no improvements to the opportunities for APS 6th graders to study world languages in the current 2013/14 school year, nor are there countywide plans to address the problem for next year. The 6th grade gap in language instruction continues to persist for many of our students.⁴ Our committee recommended a low-cost remedy in its 2013 Report with Recommendations⁵ (following upon six years of previous descriptions by the WLAC of the need to address it). We were pleased to learn recently that Swanson MS will implement a schedule similar to our recommendation, but it is disconcerting that steps to address this issue were not taken in time to be included in the 2014/15 Program of Studies (POS, see 12/17 Work Session on World Languages, Dec. 17, 2013). The WLAC urges APS to make every effort now to improve the situation for this coming fall's 6th graders at the remaining middle schools and to ensure that the opportunities for proficiency-based Grade 6 World Language Instruction are fully described in the 2015-16 Program of Studies. It is unacceptable that addressing this issue be delayed yet again.

(iv) Related to the previous point has been the failure of APS to take any significant step to address the problem that the 7th grade Spanish I classes may include students with very wide ranges of experience studying and proficiency in the language. While some schools have offered more than one section of Spanish I, which, by grouping students, somewhat alleviates this concern, others have not. Seventh grade language students need to be grouped on the basis of their demonstrated proficiency in the language, so that each individual student may progress appropriately. Such differentiation will need to be continued at least through the Spanish II classes in 8th grade.

Our 2013 Recommendation #1 proposed to remove the primary obstacles to a fully articulated, proficiency-oriented world language curriculum for all of Arlington's children by this coming fall. This goal lies at the center of all the issues enumerated above. We discuss these in conjunction with the review of the status of our past Recommendation #1 below.

Section II of this non-recommending year report reviews the WLAC's activities during the 2013-14 SY. It is followed in Section III with a brief overview of several significant developments in APS WL programs. Section IV presents the three recommendations from our 2013 WLAC report and provides analysis and a report of their status. We address the School Board's stated key priorities in Section V. In particular, we will offer

⁴ TS courses frequently combine students with different years of studying the language and are not offered at all middle schools. Moreover, most 6th graders from elementary schools that do not teach a WL have to wait until grade 7 to begin. We will discuss these issues in more detail in Section IV.

⁵ See pages 20 to 26 of the WLAC Report with Recommendations, dated January 29, 2013.

<http://www.apsva.us/cms/lib2/VA01000586/Centricity/Domain/29/WLAC%20Report-2013-Final.pdf>

perspectives from world language education on the topics of (a) distance learning, (b) increased class size, (c) connections between world languages and reading improvement, and (d) closing the achievement gap. A brief description of the members of our committee in Section VI and Appendices of relevant tables in Section VII conclude our report.

Before discussing the activities of our committee for this year we would like to thank World Languages Supervisor, Marleny Perdomo, for her work to bring first-rate world language learning to our school children. We thank Marleny for her passion and the time she has shared with our committee for yet another year, and for the wonderful and productive collaboration over the summer, when she guided the development of the PPM. It has been a privilege to work with Marleny.

The WLAC would also like to thank the World Languages staff for their dedication to APS and to our children. Melissa Sen and Margo Hope, especially, have contributed hugely to the success of our World Language Celebration in March, 2013, and to many other endeavors.

We are grateful for the leadership of the ACI, Patty Petroccione and Rebecca Hunter (a former WLAC member), as well as the help and interest of our ACI liaison, Jennifer Vogel. Lastly, our committee would like to thank the School Board, Superintendent Dr. Patrick Murphy and Assistant Superintendent of Instruction, Connie Skelton, for their dedication and commitment to World Languages in our public schools.

II WLAC Current Year Activities

The activities for the committee for this year included:

- Committee Report.** We submitted our Report with Recommendations in January, 2013, and, subsequent to its presentation to the ACI (February 6), also submitted a revised executive summary and an 8-page response to questions and comments from ACI members. Presentation to the School Board on May 30.
- World Languages Program Evaluation.** Participation in the Stakeholder Task Force meeting by Rick Jackson and Silke Reeves, Feb. 5, 2013. Attendance and short presentations at the School Board work session (Rick, May 13) and the final meeting of the Evaluation Committee (Silke, May 22).
- World Language Celebration, March 5, 2013.** Together with the APS World Languages Department, the WLAC organized this celebration of language learning and culture during National Foreign Language Week. The focus of this year's event, held in the Little Theater at Washington-Lee High School, was on what students can do with language. The celebration included an extensive exhibit of student work from APS Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Japanese, Latin and Spanish classes. Student performances showing Chinese, Spanish

and Arabic cultures rounded off the afternoon. We thank Marleny Perdomo, Melissa Sen and Margo Hope for their tremendous efforts in making this event a reality. We are also grateful for the attendance of WL teachers and school principals, as well as the remarks made by Abby Raphael and Dr. Murphy at the event.

Our committee is currently rethinking how to best mark National Foreign Language Week as an annual APS event in the future. It would be wonderful if different groups from the APS community could be involved each year. We are unable to host the event again during 2014.

- **Response to Questions on FLES versus FLEX.** Upon request by last year's ACI leadership, our committee addressed the issues raised in a memo to the School Board from Dan Dixon that compared costs of FLEX and FLES programs (submitted by the WLAC to the ACI chairs and the School Board on June 27, 2013).

- **World Languages Open House**, December 5, 2013. World Language Supervisor Marleny Perdomo and Dr. Frederick Jackson, a WLAC member and former WLAC chair, presented about APS world language offerings in middle and high school to Arlington parents and students. This was the sixth year of these presentations.

The presentation included the benefits of learning languages, distance learning formats for our less commonly taught languages (introduced by Ms. Pat Teske, Director, Instructional and Innovative Technologies) and opportunities for support during high school and after graduation. Several APS WL students shared their language learning experiences with families during a roundtable discussion.

- **Provision of Input for Planning Secondary School Focus Group Sessions.** The WLAC provided input to APS on questions to be used for secondary student focus groups on their learning experiences in WL classes, and one member participated in piloting the questionnaire. (February/ March 2014).

Ongoing Activities:

- **Participation in the Progressive Planning Model.** Under the guidance of Marleny Perdomo, World Languages Supervisor, the WLAC has participated in the development of the PPM through additional meetings and discussion at our regular committee meetings (since July 2013).

- **School Board Session on World Languages.** On December 17, 2013 the School Board held a work session dedicated to the topic of World Languages. The session was centered around the presentation of the Progressive Planning Model. The WLAC is grateful for the School Board's invitation to speak at this event. WLAC Chair Caroline Bosc presented a statement on behalf of the

committee during the work session, which was also attended by several other WLAC members.

- **Meetings on Adoption of New French Course Materials.** WLAC chair, Caroline Bosc, represented the WLAC in the ongoing meetings about adoption of new French textbook materials, expected to be completed in March 2014.
- **Contact with APS Student Advisory Group.** WLAC chair Caroline Bosc has been in touch with this group and will meet with them at their next meeting on April 3.
- **Monthly Meetings.** The committee regularly meets the third Thursday of each month, from 6:45-8:45pm.

III Developments in APS World Language Programs

This section briefly lists other positive developments in Arlington's WL programs that are not mentioned elsewhere in our report.

- **Credit by Exam.** This opportunity is now in its second year. Compared to 2012, when 105 students (out of 130 test takers) passed, in the fall of 2013 the World Languages Department administered examinations to 185 APS students in 19 languages, and 133 passed. APS offers the test for 23 different languages. A passing score earns students one or two high school credits in the language of the exam.
- **American Sign Language (ASL).** APS had planned to offer ASL for the first time for the 2013/14 SY at Wakefield High School. Despite strong student interest, the course could not be offered, because APS was unable to find a teacher. However, it is now planned that ASL will be offered as a world language at every comprehensive high school starting in fall 2014.
- **Assessments.** APS administered in 2012 and 2013 the national Standards-based Measurement of Proficiency (STAMP) to students in their third year of High School Language of every world language except Latin, and will administer it to this year's students this coming April.⁶ The Spanish STAMP test is also administered annually to 8th grade Immersion students at Gunston. The WLAC has only just begun to review the results of these tests, but it is already clear that the Gunston Immersion students have performed extremely well on the 2012 and 2013 tests, particularly in the skills of Listening and Reading. The elementary school STAMP test (STAMP4Se) is being given to fifth grade FLES and Immersion students as this

⁶ The STAMP tests are computer-delivered language proficiency tests developed by Avant Assessments of Portland, Oregon, in collaboration with the Center for Applied Language Studies at the University of Oregon. The tests assess proficiency in Speaking, Listening, Reading and Writing; they are administered annually by APS to elementary (5th grade FLES and immersion) and secondary students (to Level 3 and to 8th grade immersion students),

report is being written. When available, results will be able to be compared with the last administration of this test in 2012.

- **STARTALK.** We are pleased that the federally-funded STARTALK secondary school program, an introduction to Chinese and Arabic, could again be offered in Arlington for the seventh consecutive year during the summer of 2013 (at no cost to participants) and will be offered again in summer 2014. Unfortunately, the elementary program (grades 4-5), which was so popular in the summer of 2012, was not renewed for the summer of 2013 due to a reduction in Federal funding for the program.

- **French Textbook Adoption:** Making funds available to update the French curriculum has been a priority, in particular because the French series currently under use is outdated and the electronic resources can no longer be accessed.

IV Review of Status of Previous Recommendations:

Past Recommendation #1:

Implement the long-standing APS commitment to a fully articulated sequence of world language education with the goal of enabling each graduate from Arlington schools to be proficient in English and at least one other language, by eliminating the following three obstacles to that implementation.

- Objective 1: Enable every Arlington elementary school child (K-5) to have reasonable access to regular proficiency-based WL instruction by (a) implementing FLES or Immersion programs in every APS school; (b) permitting students at non-WL schools to transfer into a nearby school; or (c) by a combination of those strategies⁷
- Objective 2: In grade 6 offer a well-articulated continuation of Spanish for those students rising from FLES programs and offer beginning language instruction for those who have never studied another language
- Objective 3: Ensure that every student in the 7th grade is placed into a language class that corresponds to his/her proficiency level and that challenges him/her to excel.

⁷ In the event, the very high enrollments at almost every elementary school in Arlington have made a solution based on school transfers impractical. There is insufficient space at any FLES school to accept transfers.

The rationale for this recommendation stemmed from the persistent obstacles to a fully articulated sequence of language study⁸ for all children; the three objectives address the three broken links in the sequence. In our report we offered short term steps to be implemented as early as the 2013/14 SY, as well as longer term solutions to the obstacles.

The key response to Recommendation #1 from the School Board has been to direct APS in July 2013 to develop the PPM⁹. We are very thankful for the involvement that has been granted to the WLAC in that development. The PPM was presented by Marleny Perdomo during the School Board Work Session on WL on December 17, 2013.

We will focus on the three objectives in turn, providing additional background as needed.

Objective 1.

Our report had recommended improved access for any family that desired it to elementary WL programs in the short term and universal access for all elementary children to a nearby WL program in the longer term.

STATUS

(i) Our committee applauds the School Board and APS for offering the FLEX program to 5th graders in the nine schools that remained without language instruction this current SY.¹⁰ This is a small but valuable first step towards giving access to WL programs to all of our elementary school children. As of December 2013, 147 children¹¹, representing close to 20% of the 750 eligible 5th graders, are now learning Spanish in the before- or after-school program¹², which is without cost for APS families. The program is offered two days a week for a total of 80 minutes and runs from October 15 through April 10, with parents and students retaining access to the online component of the program through the summer.

The FLEX program is taught using the Middlebury College online program. The online material is supplemented by activities that are facilitated by a teacher, which focus on practice with the materials and participation in communicative simulations and games. Moreover, Oakridge and Abingdon are also able to offer an accelerated program to

⁸ By “fully articulated sequence of study,” we mean a curricular sequence that enables each child to make continuous progress in learning. Such a sequence might be taken in a single language, but might also involve the study of two or more languages, such as Spanish K-6 and Chinese (or, e.g., French) 7-12.

⁹ See <http://www.apsva.us/cms/lib2/VA01000586/Centricity/Domain/176/2013-14/070813mi.pdf>.

¹⁰ For a list of schools see footnote #1.

¹¹ Of an initial enrollment of 172 students

¹² Nottingham is able to offer two groups, including one in the morning.

Spanish heritage children. Students completing the FLEX program will have the potential opportunity to take Transitional Spanish (TS) in middle school, if their proficiency qualifies them.¹³ To qualify, students must demonstrate having a basic ability in Spanish such as ability to talk about self, family and school. Students demonstrate use of memorized phrases and understand spoken Spanish in a 1-1 interview.

(ii) The School Board, on July 8, 2013, directed APS to develop a plan to eliminate early-release Wednesdays and implement FLES programs in the remaining 9 schools that currently do not offer a WL program in the school day. We are delighted that the School Board has chosen this path and reaffirmed its commitment to world language instruction in elementary school.

At the December 17 Work Session on world languages, Dr. Murphy indicated his preference – budget permitting - for adding three FLES schools in the 2014/15 SY and implementing FLES in all schools, including the new elementary school, over a period of three years. The School Board also re-affirmed its commitment to roll out the program countywide. The WLAC looks forward with great anticipation to the achievement of this long-delayed goal. Recently, Dr. Murphy unveiled his budget with two new FLES schools planned for this fall 2014.¹⁴

(iii) Lastly, Abingdon Elementary School has begun, on its own initiative and in consultation with the World Language Office, to build a FLES program starting in grades K and 1 and expanding in subsequent years into the next grades. Abingdon began by introducing Spanish instruction in the current 2013/14 SY. The school had already eliminated early release before beginning to implement the phased-in FLES program. We applaud the principal, Joanne Uyeda, for taking steps to integrate world language learning into the regular school curriculum, using existing resources.¹⁵

Objective 2

Objective 2 recommended that APS offer both a well-articulated continuation of Spanish for 6th grade students rising from FLES programs and beginning language instruction for those who have never studied another language or who wish to switch from Spanish.

As a short term solution that could be realized immediately for the current 2013-14 SY, without changing middle school schedules, the WLAC suggested offering proficiency-oriented WL within the current 6th grade scheduling model. Some APS

¹³ As discussed below, TS offers 6th graders an opportunity to continue with Spanish after FLES. All students rising from a FLES school are eligible, regardless of the years they participated in the FLES program. Other students can test into TS by taking a placement test administered by World Language Office staff.

¹⁴ http://www.apsva.us/cms/lib2/VA01000586/Centricity/Domain/99/BudgetFY2015_Proposed_Final.pdf

¹⁵ Abingdon also offers the new FLEX program to interested 5th graders.

middle schools already offer TS, a continuation course for 6th grade students rising from FLES schools. This course is taught in alternation with a required semester course in English Reading¹⁶. The WLAC's recommendation was to expand 6th grade WL offerings by beginning to offer one-semester introductory language courses in, e.g., Spanish, French and Latin for students who had no elementary school language or who had studied FLES Spanish but wished to begin a new language. The WLAC's recommendation, moreover, specified that Spanish continuation courses should build on student's prior proficiency. Students would then be offered a choice of either taking a full year of English Reading or dividing the time each school week between Reading and proficiency-oriented WL instruction—either Spanish Transition or an introductory language course. This approach would make the opportunity for world language learning available to almost all students in grade 6.¹⁷

STATUS

2013/14 School Year. As stated above, this issue has not been addressed in the current SY. As detailed in Chart 1 on the next page and in more detail in Appendix 1, 6th grade WL opportunities offered by our (non-immersion) middle schools continue to differ widely among schools, and students continue to experience inequity of access: while Swanson and Williamsburg offer TS alternating with English Reading throughout the school year during the school day, Kenmore also offers TS, but as a one-semester block.¹⁸ These schools have also been able to include some differentiation in instruction, where TS enrollments are sufficiently high to permit more than a single class.¹⁹ Jefferson MS also offers TS, but only once a week, on one afternoon (ACT II), and without differentiation. Gunston offered its non-immersion students the opportunity to take a TS course, but not enough students registered for it this year, so FLES graduates at Gunston do not have an opportunity to continue their Spanish.

Students rising from elementary schools without language programs must continue to wait until grade 7 to begin studying a WL, exacerbating the educational inequality for yet another year.²⁰ This collectively constitutes the *6th grade gap*.

¹⁶ See pages 20 to 26 of WLAC Recommending Report dated January 29, 2013. <http://www.apsva.us/cms/lib2/VA01000586/Centricity/Domain/29/WLAC%20Report-2013-Final.pdf>. TS is also open to other students with Spanish background, who can test into the course. We discuss the offerings at middle schools in more detail below.

¹⁷ Students who are reading below grade level are required to take a full year of English Reading. For such students who are native speakers (and readers) of Spanish, however, research has shown that developing fluency in reading the first language will have positive benefits for learning to read English. See Section VI of this report.

¹⁸ This is a change from the 2012-13 school year when TS at Kenmore was offered year-round, alternating with Reading. The WLAC believes this change by Kenmore may significantly reduce the world language proficiency and retention of Kenmore students as compared to the original year-round offering.

¹⁹ Students who are not rising from APS elementary Spanish programs can test into TS in a test administered by the WL Office.

²⁰ An exception is HB Woodlawn's secondary program, where introduction to WL is offered for grade 6 as well. As also shown in the chart, the exploratory wheels at Gunston, Jefferson, Kenmore,

Chart 1. Language Offerings in Grade 6: Overview 2013-14

School	Proficiency Oriented WL				WL in Wheel Rotations	
	Language	Classes cover SY?	Differentiation by Grouping	Time Period	Language	Duration
GMS	TS offered, but didn't make up.		N/A		Both: F, L	24 days
HBW	F,L,S, TS	Yes	Yes	During day	N/A	
JMS	TS	Yes	No	After school	Choice: F, S	9 weeks
KMS	TS	No	Limited	During day	F	23 days
SMS	TS	Yes	Limited	During day	No	
WMS	TS	Yes	Limited	During day	L	6 weeks

Source: Compilation by the World Languages Office. **Abbreviations Middle Schools:** GMS-Gunston, HBW-H-B-Woodlawn Secondary Program, JMS-Jefferson, KMS-Kenmore, SMS-Swanson, WMS-Williamsburg. **Languages:** F-French, L-Latin, S-Spanish.

2014/15 School Year. This coming fall, Jefferson middle school will offer introductory classes in five world languages, plus continuing and advanced levels of Spanish.²¹ The school has re-arranged its schedule to accommodate an introduction to world languages for all 6th graders in 2014/15. Each WL course will be taught on an alternating schedule, every second day, for one class period. Thus, the total time for WL will amount to one semester.²² This will allow all students to take WL, and it will also make it possible to take WL and Music, since all electives will be offered every other day. PE time will be reduced, but remain above state requirements.²³

Excepting H-B Woodlawn, which offers 6th grade courses in four languages, our other middle schools had originally indicated that they would implement no comparable improvements next fall to the 6th grade schedules, but the WLAC has recently heard that at least one other middle school now plans to offer 6th grade students the opportunity to enroll in one-semester introductory instruction in French, Latin and Spanish, as well as the Transition Spanish course. Pending budgetary considerations, a pilot has been approved for Swanson to offer 6th grade WL courses paired with a

and Williamsburg include a short WL component. As noted earlier and discussed below, Swanson and Jefferson MS will begin to offer 6th grade beginning language starting next fall.

²¹ The other languages are French, Latin, Arabic and Chinese.

²² This is the same amount of time currently scheduled for TS classes at Kenmore, Swanson and Williamsburg middle schools.

²³ We understand that in the new Jefferson schedule the possibility to offer WL to all students is obtained by a reduction of the weekly hours of PE and music. Our comments above solely pertain to the offering of WL to all Jefferson students. Judging the effects on students taking the other subjects is beyond the scope of our committee.

semester of English Reading. We hope that Jefferson's novel scheduling model and the model of coordinating English Reading with WL in a language development block will be successful examples for other middle schools to consider.

In the coming 2014/15 school year, a number of current 5th grade FLEX students will have the opportunity to apply to participate in the TS courses offered at their middle schools. Access to the online FLEX materials will remain available to students through the summer, so that families can continue Spanish learning until the start of 6th grade. A few of these students may develop sufficient proficiency in Spanish to participate in a TS course. But we note that – unless our middle schools properly account for prior Spanish proficiency and provide sufficient differentiation to permit continued building of proficiency – this may exacerbate the existing differences in student backgrounds in a TS class. Some TS students may have as little as one year of language exposure through FLES or FLEX, while others have as many as 6 years of regular FLES.

2015/16 School Year: Phase 3 and beyond of the current PPM includes the introduction of 6th grade beginning courses in at least three languages (French, Latin and Spanish). We strongly support this plan and continue to hope that it might begin sooner for the remaining middle schools. In addition, we urge APS to engage in widespread outreach next school year to inform the families of future 6th graders about the plan, which will be crucial to allow them to be aware of the revised program offerings and the opportunities that these programs present. Our committee advocates that the preparatory work begin now, so that the new 6th grade schedule for the 2015-2016 SY is fully operational and understood and has been communicated well in advance to the APS community. School counselors should receive the information no later than the end of this calendar year (2014), so as to assist the families of rising 6th graders with scheduling options early in 2015.²⁴

BACKGROUND

An overwhelming 80.7% of last year's students in grade 6 and 77% of this year's are not studying a WL. Moreover, in the 2012-13 SY, 55% of 5th graders participated in elementary WL programs (FLES and Immersion). Approximately 59% of these students are no longer studying a world language in grade 6 during this 2013-14 SY.²⁵ Together

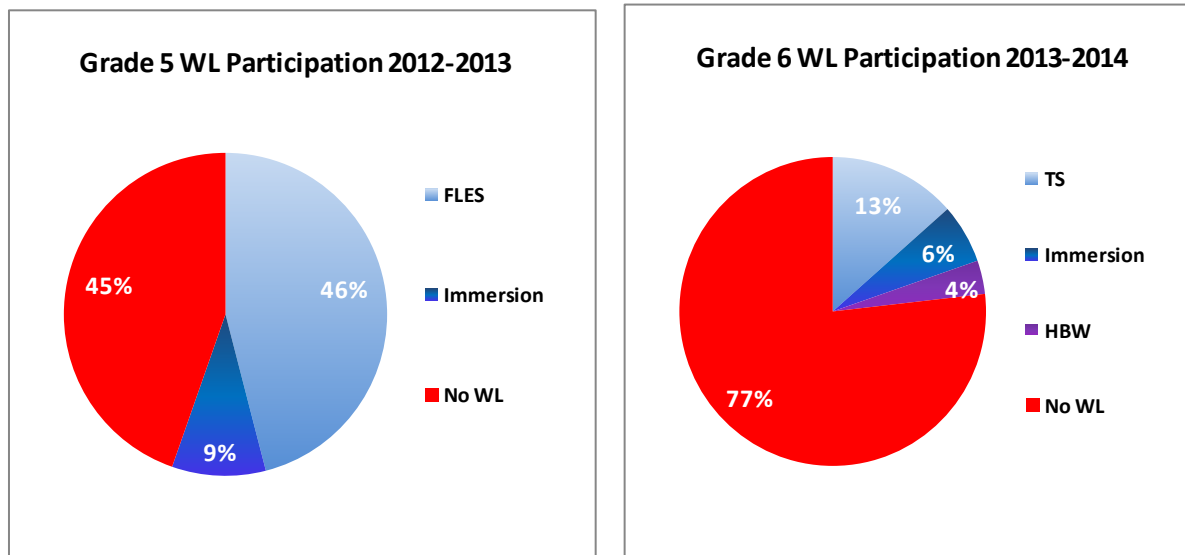
²⁴ We continue, however, to advocate for such an offering of WL to all 6th graders reading at grade level to take place this coming fall 2014.

²⁵ As shown in Appendix 2, 909 5th grade students attended elementary schools with either FLES or Immersion WL programs during 2012/13. This year, only 373 of 6th graders were enrolled in WL—whether TS, Gunston's immersion program or WL classes at HBW. Thus, approximately $373/909 = 41\%$ of elementary WL students are continuing language study in grade 6 (and approximately $323/909 = 36\%$ continue with Spanish). Since some grade 6 WL students (those attending HBW and those testing into TS) have come from elementary schools that do not teach a WL, and since some students have left APS, this is only an approximation of the true percentage of students who continue WL study from 5th grade into grade 6.

with the students who rose from elementary schools with no language programs, who cannot begin language study until grade 7, these students make up the 77% of 6th graders that are not studying any WL at all (see Appendix 2).

Of last year’s immersion students, 63% of the elementary students at Key and Claremont are continuing in Gunston’s middle school immersion program (62% in 2012/13).²⁶

Only 14% of 6th graders at our middle schools are enrolled in TS – in stark contrast to the 46% of last year’s 5th graders who attended FLES schools and therefore studied Spanish. They may have been required to take a full year course in English Reading skills (ca. 5%-10%), or they chose to study Reading for two semesters rather than take one semester each of Reading and Transitional Spanish. Appendix 3 shows that enrollments in 6th grade TS vary between schools. At Kenmore, Swanson and Williamsburg it has been possible to group students according to proficiency and to achieve partial differentiation. This is so important, since students reach middle schools from a variety of elementary schools with differing numbers of years and weekly minutes of instruction in the FLES program. Further, some middle schools have been able to follow up TS in grade 6 with an advanced cohort of Spanish I in grade 7. These differences in TS courses may account for some of our student’s choices. Their choices are shown in the charts below:²⁷



Source: Data compiled by the World Languages Office (see Appendix 2).

²⁶ 97 out of 154 students who attended elementary Immersion programs continue at Gunston. Some elementary Immersion graduates also are in the SFS course at HBW, see Appendix 2.

²⁷ Note that the courses at HBW include TS, SFS (which former immersion students can attend) and introductory WL courses. For example, $215/1592 = 14\%$ of all 6th grade students are in TS courses. This exceeds the indicated 13% due to TS at HBW, see Appendix 2.

In contrast to the 6th grade, an impressive 82 % of 7th and 8th graders are enrolled in proficiency-oriented WL courses this SY (see Appendix 3).²⁸

The WLAC has for many years recommended action to address the 6th grade issue, by both offering a continuation of elementary Spanish that builds on prior proficiency and removing the inequity associated with barring so many of our students from WL study until grade 7.²⁹ We are very pleased that Jefferson and Swanson will offer these opportunities to their 6th graders this fall. We urge APS to also implement such a program for Gunston (non-immersion), Kenmore and Williamsburg in the coming 2014/15 SY and to advertise it immediately to parents of current 5th graders. We disagree with the timetable in the PPM in this respect.³⁰

Offering proficiency-oriented WL classes in grade 6 to most students is needed now to address a needless loss of language proficiency for FLES (and now also FLEX-) students as well as the associated loss of APS resources that have been invested in their learning. Offering introductory language courses also provides a more equitable set of opportunities for students who had no access to WL in elementary school.

Objective 3

Objective 3 argued that WL course offerings in grades 7 and 8, which carry high school credit, must meet students at their demonstrated proficiency levels in order to provide a well-articulated continuity of instruction. APS needs to offer advanced courses in Spanish for students in middle school with existing Spanish proficiency, through FLES, Immersion or other learning. Doing this will almost certainly motivate students to enroll in 6th grade TS, because they will recognize that hard work in the TS course can enable them to gain a more advanced placement in Spanish I in 7th grade. In addition, other language classes that continue the learning experience started in grade 6 introductory courses need to be offered, as well as classes for true beginners.

STATUS

None of these needs is currently scheduled to be addressed until Phase IV of the PPM³¹, that is, not until SY 2016/17.

At present and until then, while there is some differentiation by proficiency in Spanish I and II in grades 7 and 8 at Swanson and Williamsburg,³² the other middle schools

²⁸ See also Appendix 4 of our 2012-13 Report for middle school WL enrollment in earlier years. Data are from an official compilation by the World Languages Office, as of Sept. 18, 2013.

²⁹ See our 2006-07, 2008-09, 2010-11 and 2012-13 reports, as well as our Middle School Proposal - Feedback 3/19/2012.

³⁰ This is also reflected in the comments that WLAC chair, Caroline Bosc, made to the School Board on December 17, 2013, reprinted in Appendix 5.

³¹ As presented at the School Board Work Session on WL, December 17, 2013.

³² The two differentiated cohorts at Swanson and Williamsburg are challenging to schedule, since schedules need to incorporate all subjects that students take.

reportedly do not differentiate for the students in class, because there are not enough students rising from the TS program (see discussion of Objective 2 immediately above.) Thus, students with as many as 7 years of Spanish learning (K-6) may continue to be grouped together in Grade 7 Spanish I with beginners who have had no prior Spanish exposure. This is not acceptable.

Our committee strongly urges APS to move up this phase in the PPM, so that 7th grade courses at all middle schools meet students at their proficiency levels. Further, we expect Jefferson (and Swanson) to accelerate this component and address the need of students rising from all of their grade 6 WL classes.

2011 – 2017 Strategic Plan Alignment:

Our past Recommendation #1 to provide early language learning to all of Arlington's elementary students that is continued in an articulated proficiency-oriented sequence supports Goal 1: *Ensure that Every Student is Challenged and Engaged*. Components of this goal are *advanced communication techniques*, which include WL acquisition. Goal 1 also highlights *character development* and the importance of understanding cultural differences and of communicating with persons of differing linguistic and cultural backgrounds. It has been shown that learning a second language also helps cognitive development and executive function, thereby aiding our students succeed in the *21st century skills* also included in this goal.

Objective 1 further addresses Goal 2: *Eliminate Achievement Gaps*: Large-scale research studies in other states indicate that beginning language study in elementary school may well aid in achieving this goal for subjects beyond WL, to which we return in Section V.

Goal 4 of the Strategic Plan: *Optimal Learning Environments* includes managing *resources efficiently and effectively to enhance teaching and learning*. Together with Goal 1 above, this challenges our school system to offer our children learning environments that connect to the knowledge they have already acquired. Our current grade 6 and grade 7 WL offerings fail both goals for many of our students, because students are not grouped together in ways that encourage and facilitate learning. The investment made by APS into its excellent FLES programs is threatened if students cannot effectively continue their learning in grade 6 and beyond. Similarly, the offerings in grade 7 (and 8) need to build on student's existing knowledge. If APS continues to group wide differences in proficiency levels together, we fail to challenge and engage each of our students, and resources invested into earlier years of language learning are lost. Our recommendations address these problems and will, when fully implemented, help APS to better achieve the goals set forth in the Strategic Plan.

Budgetary Implications:

Objective 1. APS has estimated the total cost to bring FLES to the remaining 9 schools

at an additional \$550,000 per school, or a total of \$ 4,950,000 per year for the nine schools. Of this amount, we have estimated that approximately \$2.7 million, or 55%, are the costs dedicated to providing 90 minutes of weekly world language instruction for all the students in the nine schools.³³

Objectives 2 and 3. No additional school hours (and thus teacher time) are needed to implement the new WL offerings in grades 6–8. Rather, our 2013 report’s short term recommendations represented a re-allocation of at least 90 minutes in the school week to proficiency-oriented world language classes. Thus, these two objectives incur no recurring costs. One time costs are incurred to purchase and develop course materials and provide teacher training. This would amount to about \$10,000 per school. In addition, some small one-time transitional costs (of less than \$10,000) will be incurred and need to be budgeted, since a new schedule has to be developed, and the new offerings advertised to Arlington families.

We project that under the current situation of rising enrollments, schools will not find themselves with an excess of Reading teachers. We anticipate that hiring additional WL teachers will likely be necessary, but additional teachers will be needed in any event to meet rising enrollments.

ACI Vote:

Yes	No	Abstained	Total Score	Total Vote	Rank
12	5	2	67	10	5

Past Recommendation #2:

Provide a minimum of three classes per week of instruction for a total of no fewer than 90 minutes per week in every elementary school’s language program.

STATUS

As of the current SY, most elementary schools now teach at least the minimum required time of 90 minutes of Spanish per week, which has been recommended by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL).³⁴ There are,

³³ The WLAC estimate is from the committee’s response to an email addressed to the School Board by Dan Dixon, submitted to the ACI leadership on June 27, 2013 (p. 7, Appendix). Eliminating Early Release Wednesdays also entails additional costs for 45 minutes of instruction and teacher planning time in the other subjects.

³⁴ Retrieved from <http://www.actfl.org/news/position-statements/early-language-learning>.

moreover, a number of schools that teach more than 90 minutes each week (Glebe, Jamestown, McKinley). We applaud them.

Elementary school specials typically are taught as 45-minute classes. Thus, due to the resultant scheduling difficulties, the majority of schools provide the minimum of 90 minutes as bi-weekly classes of 45 minutes each, rather than 3 classes of 30 minutes. Additionally, for these schools, necessary transition times between classes may at times reduce the actual time available for learning Spanish to a total of less than 90 minutes each week.

We fully understand the challenge that scheduling three 30-minute classes entails for school principals. However, frequent contact with the language is necessary for our students to develop their proficiency. Our committee thus continues to recommend that APS seek ways in which schools can provide three sessions of language instruction per week to all elementary students.

2011 – 2017 Strategic Plan Alignment:

Proper delivery of WL programs within a fully articulated sequence that maximizes student learning ensures that our children are challenged and can grow to their full potential, and further that resources are not wasted – addressing both Goal 1 and Goal 4 of the Strategic Plan.

Budgetary Implications: We argued in our past report that “the requirement stated in this recommendation is already part of the Guidelines for FLES Implementation” (p. 27) and has thus already been budgeted.

ACI Vote:

Yes	No	Abstained	Total Score	Total Vote	Rank
15	3	1	56	9	10

Past Recommendation #3:

Establish a “World Language Seal of Excellence” for the High School Diploma.

Status:

There has been no action on this recommendation.

Background.

We had recommended that a seal of excellence be awarded to graduating seniors who successfully complete a minimum of six high school credits of language study at the secondary level, with a minimum of four of those years in one language.

The rationale for this recommendation was twofold: first, the seal was to provide an incentive for our students to continue their language study beyond the three credits required to earn the Advanced Studies Diploma (ASD). This would help students attain higher levels of language proficiency and understanding about other cultures. To become truly proficient takes a long-term commitment. The ACTFL guidelines adopted by APS show that from 2-6 years of study in secondary school are needed to reach an Intermediate level of proficiency, depending on the language, the learner's abilities and the intensity of the learning experience. To attain Advanced proficiency on the ACTFL scale requires a beginner to study nine school years or more.³⁵ Second, the seal was to reward commitment to language learning by students on their high school diplomas. The seal would also send a signal to colleges and employers that could help our students when starting their career paths.

Only 63.2 % of our high school students are taking a WL class this 2013/14 school year. Thus, more than a third of high school students either do not study a WL or no longer study a WL. Moreover, only 35% of those high school students who do study a language (and a small 21% of all high school students) are enrolled in higher level coursework (Levels 4 and higher) and, thus, have potential to develop strong functional proficiency. Enrollments in WL drop steadily towards graduation: from 84% and 80% of students in grades 9 and 10, respectively, to only 30% of students in grade 12.

This is illustrated in the charts on the following page. Detailed enrollment data for high school students by grade and course level are provided in Appendix 4.³⁶

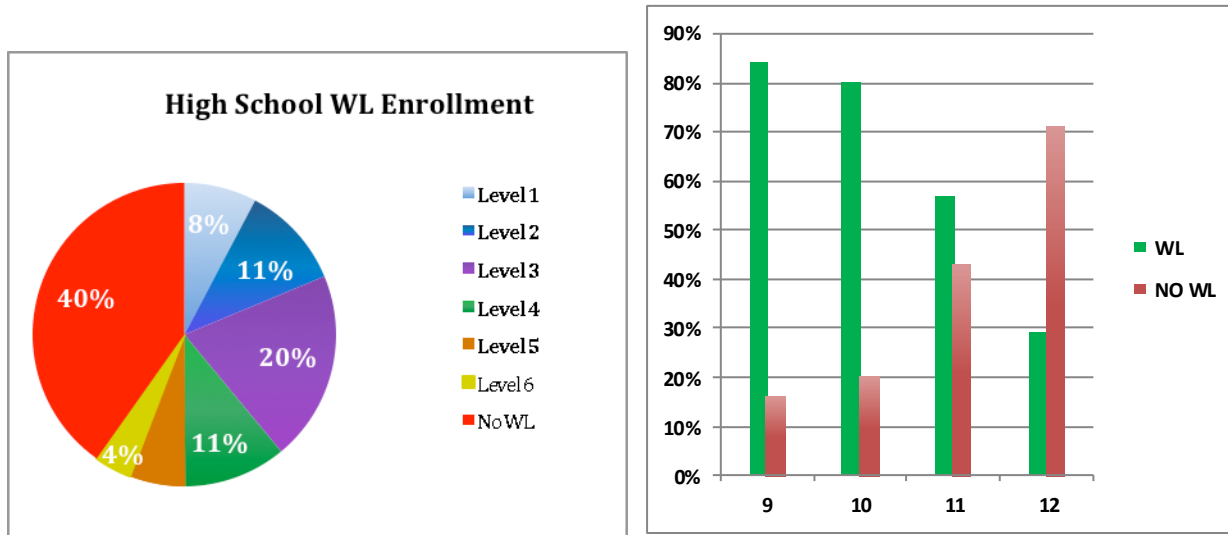
This recommendation did not receive a high ranking in the ACI. The School Board and APS have not implemented it, despite its very low costs and potentially high return in student motivation. However, this type of student recognition is gaining momentum in other school systems across the country: the "Seal of Biliteracy" on the high school diploma was first introduced in California in 2011; since then the states of New York,

³⁵ See World Languages Program Description, World Languages Office, Dec. 2012. Also ACTFL Performance Descriptors for Language Learners, 2012. <http://www.actfl.org/publications/guidelines-and-manuals/actfl-performance-descriptors-language-learners>, esp. p. 13.

³⁶ Grade level data are from a compilation by the World Languages Office as of Jan. 2014. Figures for enrollments for language levels are from an official compilation by the WL Office as of Sept. 18, 2013. Levels 4 and higher typically represent students in grades 10, 11 and 12. Level 1-3 courses represent a mix of student grades: some students begin language study in high school, and for some these courses represent the second language. Note that the ASD WL requirement may also be met by completing two credits in two different WLs. Students not taking a WL are from a full range of different high school grades; this is a mix of students including those that stop language study after level 3, those who have never studied a WL in high school, and those who may add WL to their course schedule until their final years. In the chart, high school immersion levels 1 and 2 at Wakefield HS are included with Levels 3 and 4, respectively. See Appendix 4.

New Jersey, Illinois, Texas, Utah, Colorado, Washington, and Wisconsin have followed.³⁷ Other states, including Virginia, are reportedly considering it.³⁸

Our committee views continued language study through the high school years as very important, not only to continue to build proficiency,³⁹ but also for students' developing understanding of other cultures and people. This is an integral part of language study. And Americans' learning of a world language ought not end in the sophomore or junior year of high school!



Source: Numbers compiled for 2013-14 by the World Languages Office.

The WLAC is currently reconsidering our wording for this recommendation with the aim of conveying the benefits of such a recognition to the School Board and ACI more effectively. We are considering recognizing potential additional indicators of commitment to WL excellence, beyond successful enrollment in APS courses. Measured proficiency might also be a desirable factor. We also realize that a new name for the seal might better be chosen, so as not to signal another award for academic grades with the wording “excellence,” and instead to emphasize the element of commitment to the subject. We intend to include a new proposal for a diploma seal of recognition as part of our report with recommendations this fall.

³⁷ See *The Language Educator*, February 2014, pg. 47: “The Seal of Biliteracy: Giving Value to Language Learning.”

³⁸ APS’s Marleny Perdomo is a member of the Virginia statewide committee that is developing criteria for establishing such a seal.

³⁹ With four years of high school WL study students typically can reach a level of Intermediate on the ACTFL scale; if those four years build upon an existing foundation in the language, then significantly higher proficiency is accessible by the learner. In addition, if students have already developed proficiency in one or more languages, they can achieve proficiency faster in learning a new language.

2011 – 2017 Strategic Plan Alignment:

The continuation of language learning through the senior year of high school, addressed by past Recommendation #3 within the context of a properly articulated sequence that builds proficiency, contributes to achieving the aims of Goal 1 of the Strategic Plan and of the Value Statement made by the School Board three years ago. Indeed, language proficiency, enhanced cultural understanding and cross-cultural effectiveness, as recognized by the proposed Seal, are critical components of 21st Century Competence.

Budgetary Implications: In our 2013 report we estimated the one-time costs to create promotional materials and Seals of Excellence at \$10,000.

ACI Vote:

Yes	No	Abstained	Total Score	Total Vote	Rank
10	3	6	13	2	22

V Analysis of School Board Priorities

Our committee has spent some time this year thinking about the priorities to which the School Board has directed attention. While our deliberations are ongoing, we present below some of our current thinking about these issues. We do this in order to promote further dialogue; it does not represent our committee's final views on these issues.

1. Distance Learning.

1.1. Experience with WL Distance Learning at APS

A distance learning course is defined by APS as one where teacher, students and content are in different locations, so that "instruction and learning occur independent of place at least for parts of the time".⁴⁰ For WL learning, where speaking and communication are of utmost importance, distance formats require that quality forms of interactive communication and practice are ensured. Regular feedback is important for student learning. Courses also need to exhibit consistent quality.

Concerns Related to Distance Learning of World Languages. It can easily be imagined that the potential of technology assisted learning of world languages is the subject of considerable research at this time in the fields of Second Language Acquisition and Second Language Education.⁴¹ Some of the research results have been discouraging;

⁴⁰ Pat Teske, handout for the School Board Work Session on WL, Dec. 17, 2013.

⁴¹ Among several important studies are Leloup and Ponterio (2000) "Enhancing Authentic Language Learning Experiences Through Internet Technology;" Frank et al. (2008) "Optimal Foreign Language Learning: The Role of Technology," and (2010) "Optimal Foreign Language

for example, in a series of studies (e.g., 2010), Katharine Nielson has found that even for highly motivated government linguists, the attrition in studying independently in a completely online course is so high as to make it an untenable choice if the goal is language proficiency. Very few students, if any, can learn to function in a language with instruction that is entirely online. Interaction with a teacher or a facilitator who knows the language and can provide feedback and also interaction with peers have been shown to be essential for successful language learning.⁴² Frank et al. (2008) concluded from their study of the role of technology in optimal language learning, “The best practices for technology use [will] maximize target language practice outside of the classroom; maximize the efficiency of classroom contact time with the teacher; enable customization, share-ability, and reusability of target language content; provide rich target language input and individualized feedback; and motivate and engage students.” More generally, moreover, a major study by the U.S. Department of Education (Means, et al. 2009), although not restricted to world language learning, found that an instructional blend of online and face-to-face models is superior to either of those alone.⁴³ In considering the use of distance learning for Arlington students, these and other research findings need to be kept in mind.⁴⁴

Overview of the APS Distance Learning Program for WL. Arlington’s Distance Learning Programs provide instruction to WL students in a number of languages where enrollments are under the required 15 students to permit teacher-fronted instruction: Arabic, Chinese, German, Japanese - the less commonly taught languages in our school system – and Latin at some schools. Thus, distance learning is a solution that gives students the opportunity to choose from a wide variety of WL at every Arlington school. Additionally, the 5th grade FLEX program offered in those elementary schools that do not have a WL program, is taught largely in a distance learning format, but with some direct teacher facilitation (see Section IV above).

Learning: Assessment of Technology Integration;” Doughty and Long (2003) “Optimal Psycholinguistic Environments for Distance Foreign Language Learning;” Nielson et al. (2009) *Learning foreign languages at a distance: Characteristics of effective online courses*; and any number of articles in the online journal *Language Learning & Technology*.

⁴² Rod Ellis (2008) in his review of research literature, “Principles of Instructed Second Language Acquisition,” points out that research has demonstrated conclusively that “The opportunity to interact in the second language is central to developing second language proficiency.”

⁴³ Means, B., Toyama, Y., Murphy, R., Bakia, M., & Jones, K. (2009). *Evaluation of evidence-based practices in online learning: A meta-analysis and review of online learning studies*. Washington, D.C.: US Department of Education. Retrieved from: <http://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/tech/evidence-based-practices/finalreport.pdf>

⁴⁴ One way of blending technology with teacher-facilitated instruction that is receiving increased attention among language educators is the “flipped classroom,” where students use technology for learning that does not require a teacher and then use the classroom to practice real language use and interaction. See Muldrow (2013) “A New Approach to Language Instruction—Flipping the Classroom,” *The Language Educator*, November, pp. 28-33.

Arabic, Chinese and Latin are offered in every middle and high school; German is offered at H-B Woodlawn for middle and high school students and at all comprehensive high schools. Japanese is only offered as a high school sequence. FLEX is offered to 5th graders at 9 schools. Enrollments in each of these language programs are shown in the chart below⁴⁵. These figures divide into numerous schools as shown in Tables 1 and 2 of Appendix 6.

Language	Enrollment	# Teachers (FTE)
<i>Secondary:</i>		
Arabic	115	3
Chinese	155	2.84
German	87	2
Japanese	58	1.17
Latin ⁴⁶	44	0.8
Total Secondary	484	9.77
<i>Elementary:</i>		
FLEX	147	9 ⁴⁷

The World Languages offered to APS students use distance learning formats, including two-way audio/video, online with APS instructors and online with teachers from the provider supplemented by an APS assistant. World Language online classes are supplemented with weekly visits from an APS teacher or assistant, and all students are supported with office hours where teachers are available via phone, computer and face-to-face.⁴⁸

The Arabic Program supports Levels I and II with APS-developed online courses. Levels I and II in middle school are taught using the online courses supplemented with televised, synchronous activities with two APS teachers. These same teachers teach Levels I and II in high school using the APS-designed online courses, supplemented with weekly teacher visits, and all students are supported with office hours where teachers are available via phone, computer and face-to-face. The students in Arabic Levels 3 through 6 are using APS-developed courses combined with various resources including Arab Academy materials. Levels 3 through 6 have an APS online teacher that works with the high school program and meets with the students weekly.

⁴⁵ Compilations by the World Languages Office as of Nov. 5, 2013.

⁴⁶ Only distance learning courses. The total number of students taking Latin greatly exceeds this, as most Latin courses are teacher-fronted.

⁴⁷ Part-time, hourly rate.

⁴⁸ Because of the important active roles of teachers in these distance learning courses, they could appropriately be referred to as examples of blended learning, which has been defined in the ASTM benchmark Standards (2013) as “an instructional approach designed to optimize learning outcomes. It is an integrated approach that combines to varying degrees face-to-face instructor-facilitated learning with e-learning activities and resources that allow some level of student control over time, place, path, or pace, or a combination thereof, of learning.”

Middle and High School Students taking Chinese I and 2 courses are using APS-developed online courses. Two APS teachers support the Chinese 1 & 2 classes in all middle and high schools with weekly visits. Upper level Chinese classes are online taught through materials from Virtual Virginia; this is supplemented by weekly classroom visits by a trained Chinese teaching assistant. The Arabic and Chinese programs are the largest WL programs delivered through distance learning.

High School students also have the opportunity to take Japanese 1,2 and 3 with an APS teacher using online courses that have been updated and customized from online classes that were offered through Virtual Virginia. The Japanese teacher visits all secondary sites weekly and is available to students online and via phone.

Beginning in 2013-14, the German program moved from two-way audio/video to online classes. The two teachers are using licensed content to create the APS online classes, providing online instruction (Levels 1 through AP) to high school students across the county. They interact with students through Internet chats, and there are weekly scheduled face-to-face school visits.

Latin at Gunston, Jefferson and Kenmore Middle Schools, with enrollments of only 8, 16 and 11 students, respectively, is taught via 2-way audio/video. Here, the teacher is at one of the schools, but students at the other locations participate in the class through technology. At Wakefield, with only 14 students, Latin is taught completely online through Virtual Virginia.⁴⁹

In all the languages, students meet together at a regular class time in their schools. For online learning, a facilitator (but not a speaker of the target language) is always present.⁵⁰ Students also have access to the online materials at home.

More on Importance of Regular Teacher Contact: Some APS Examples. Especially younger and beginning language learners benefit from regular, face-to-face contact with a teacher who speaks the target language. The teacher provides opportunity for the needed interaction, facilitates activities for applying the language and also gives instant feedback. The teacher also helps students stay on track with their work. Not all students are able to master the discipline and organization required for success in online components of their classes. As a result, as was mentioned earlier, attrition in course participation is typically high for online courses, even for adults. Such a pattern can be seen through the year in APS online classes, as well.

To provide the needed human interaction, feedback, and guidance, the model of itinerant teachers was introduced after APS began to offer its *Chinese and Arabic*

⁴⁹ Compilation of data by the World Languages Office (as of 9/18/2013).

⁵⁰ The facilitator can answer questions about the technology, but normally not about the content of the course.

programs at each secondary school in the 2008-09 SY.⁵¹ The WLAC and others worried that there would not be enough students at each of the 9 schools at each level to make teacher-fronted instruction possible. The loss of teacher contact and lack of practice for students in interacting spontaneously with the language was a central concern.

We appreciate and recognize APS for introducing a model of itinerant teachers in the Arabic program beginning with the 2010-11 SY. Our 2008-09 and 2010-11 reports recommended that APS employ such a model and make weekly teacher visits to its Chinese classrooms possible. Since the 2011-12 SY, Chinese 1 and 2 now follow this model as well. Higher course levels of Chinese continue to be taught exclusively online, but as of November of 2013, APS has hired an instructional assistant to provide support to these students, as well. At the same time, middle school students of Arabic and Chinese now meet in class with teachers 1–2 days per week.⁵²

New Concerns This Year. In recent months, parents and students at H-B Woodlawn have shown dissatisfaction with the new delivery format for *German*. German had earlier been taught through two-way video/audio at all APS high schools, with the teacher delivering the live lesson from alternating schools. First and Second-Year German for combined middle and high school students at H-B Woodlawn had face-to-face instruction up through the 2011-12 SY, and adopted the two-way format for the 2012-13 SY. Subsequent falling enrollments have prompted APS to decide to deliver the language exclusively in an online format this 2013-14 SY.

In these classes, the German students meet in a classroom, which is staffed by a facilitator, but there is no regular, personal contact with a language teacher. Interaction between students and teachers largely occurs through the Internet. Enrollments in the German program have fallen from 121 to 88 students (down by 27%) over the past two school years countywide (and down from 115 students in 2010-11). The largest decline has affected level 1, where only 21 students have begun to learn German during the 2013-14 SY (down from 50 and 45 students in the 2011-12 and 2012-13 school years, respectively.)⁵³ This may in part be attributable to the change from teacher-fronted instruction to a pure online program at H-B Woodlawn, which students had not expected. Online learning appears especially challenging for younger, middle school students. We commend APS for responding to the situation quickly by adding a teaching assistant to this year's H-B Woodlawn program.

⁵¹ Both programs began as afternoon courses at single locations for middle and high school students. To allow more students to participate, but also to save transportation costs, the program was brought into the school day and offered at each secondary school.

⁵² We appreciate the responsiveness by the APS World Language Office to the need for teacher contact for middle school students: activities via two-way video/audio allow students live contact with their teacher – regardless whether the teacher actually is present or teaching from another school. It is important that these special classrooms are retained for this excellent use.

⁵³ Data are from compilations by the World Languages Office, 11/5/13.

Other Feedback from APS Distance Learning Students. The 2011-12 extensive program evaluation of APS World Language Programs included a survey of distance learning students about their experience with this instructional format. The WLAC participated in the development of the questionnaire, which was administered electronically in Spring 2011. Since then, the delivery format and content have been changed significantly for the Arabic, Chinese and German programs, so that not all the survey findings then are indicative of the current situations of distance learning.

In the survey, students expressed the desire for more teacher contact. More than 17% of students in each language, and 35% of students in the Chinese program, responded to an open-ended question that more face-to-face instruction would improve the distance-learning course.⁵⁴ It is good that APS has been able, in part, to provide it. Further student feedback on this issue is expected in the forthcoming report by the World Languages Office on student perceptions of WL programs, to be presented to the School Board in June. The WLAC will refer to that report in our Fall 2014 Report with Recommendations.

In addition to the desire for more face-to-face instruction, a few other issues stand out in casual inspection of the survey responses⁵⁵: at least 49% of students in each language agreed (or even strongly agreed) that their questions were answered by the teacher, even though the teacher was not always in the same location with them. The survey also addressed the amount of personal and virtual/phone contact time with teachers. For the two programs that have remained mostly unchanged since the time of the survey, almost 94% of Japanese students reported that they saw a teacher at least once per week, while 87.5% reported that phone or virtual contact occurred less frequently than once per week. The pattern is somewhat different in the Latin program, where 83% said that they saw a teacher in person at least once per week, but 67% reported virtual or phone communication with their teacher twice per week or more.⁵⁶

Fewer than 50% of students in all languages agreed that the target language was used [by respondents] in communication with the teacher, and even fewer affirmed this for communication among classmates during class. The WLAC plans to try to analyze the full set of survey responses more deeply, especially those that may be generalizable to the experiences of students today.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Face-to-face interaction does not need to always involve a teacher present in the classroom. Such technology as Skype or FaceTime also enables real-time interaction and can be highly successful, especially for older learners.

⁵⁵ Source: World Languages Distance Learning Survey responses, compilation by the World Languages Office.

⁵⁶ Additionally, at least 50% of students in all languages, and 60% and 71% in Japanese and Latin, respectively, felt that they were able to interact with their teacher.

⁵⁷ Despite the limited sample sizes, it may be helpful to analyze whether observed differences between responses to subjective questions in different language programs are statistically significant.

The need to make extensive use of technology and online learning in our language programs is unquestioned. It is the only practical way to provide opportunities for Arlington children to learn a range of different languages at a full range of levels of proficiency. But the Arlington experience, supported by results of empirical research, indicates that by far the most effective model will be one that blends online learning with interaction with and guidance from a trained teacher and that makes maximum use of most class-time as the site of real language use and interaction among students and a teacher or other proficient speaker of the language.

2. Hub Schools.

As we have remarked, low enrollments in WL programs and the desire to have every language offered at every secondary school have led to the adoption of some form of technology-assisted learning in place of teacher-fronted instruction. The associated problems have been discussed above together with the mitigation of some of these by providing an itinerant teacher on a regular basis and by ensuring frequent regular opportunities for contact with a teacher and for spontaneous interaction in the language.

An alternative way for APS to offer less common languages might be to teach them in fewer locations, so that the resulting enrollments would more likely be large enough to meet the required minimum of 15 students. The establishment of a few schools as “hub schools” for the teaching of low enrollment languages could make face-to-face instruction feasible. In the beginning years of the Chinese and Arabic programs, they were each offered in only one location for middle school and one location for high school (albeit not during the school day), and enrollments at each level were substantial enough for each class to be instructed by a teacher.

To avoid additional transportation costs, any such hub would presumably need to be located at school(s) where transportation is already provided (for other county programs) and where there is sufficient space to accommodate interested transfer students. Wakefield High School might serve such a role for APS, or two schools could be established as hubs for different sets of the low-enrollment languages.⁵⁸ Advance planning and good information to families would be a necessary part of this approach.

3. Increases in Class size.

An increase in class sizes has been considered frequently in recent years as one way to mitigate some of the budgetary impact of increasing enrollments as well as of adding programs, including implementing FLES in additional schools as part of the elimination of early release Wednesdays. Increased class sizes would presumably lead to cost savings by reducing the number of classes needing instruction. However, there is the

⁵⁸ Washington-Lee already serves as the high school site for IB languages, in a program which includes every APS language except German and Japanese.

likelihood of significant negative impact on student learning that would be associated with these monetary savings:

(i) Maximum Class Sizes: Spanish and French. Many world language classrooms in APS today already exceed the current planning factor formula of 25.4. This is especially prevalent in levels 1, 2 and 3 of the most popular languages (French and Spanish); for example, five sections of French and Spanish at the middle school level are taught with 27 students; one section of Spanish 2 at Jefferson has 28 learners. At the high school level, five sections of Spanish have 27 students or more.⁵⁹ Overall, 22 APS WL classrooms have 27 or more students.⁶⁰ This is not at all optimal for language learning, where pair and small-group communicative interaction, facilitated by the teacher, have been shown to be necessary for the development of functional proficiency.

Appendix 7 shows the distribution of enrollments in French and Spanish for both middle and high schools. As can be seen, there is large variation between the lower levels (1-3) and the higher level (4-6, AP, IB) language classes. This reflects the observed pattern of low enrollment in higher-level WL classes (see previous discussion of past Recommendation #3).

If maximum class sizes are to be increased for budgetary reasons, we strongly recommend that additional measures are put in place that make sure that WL classrooms do not exceed these new planning factor formulas.

(ii) Minimum Class Sizes: Less Commonly Taught Languages. For Arlington's programs of less commonly taught languages (Arabic, Chinese, German, Japanese and Latin), an increase in class size that also raises the minimum student enrollment required to warrant a teacher, would make it even less likely that classes in these languages would meet the new required threshold. Appendix 6 shows enrollments in these five languages. As discussed above, all of these are currently taught in a distance-learning format, although some schools with large enough enrollments in a class do offer teacher-fronted instruction of Latin. We have discussed the issue of distance learning in Section 1 above and the necessity to provide regular teacher contact --- ideally for all learners (but most importantly for younger students).

(iii) Optimum Class Sizes. ACTFL recommends that most effective world language instruction is carried out in classes of approximately 15 students or less, so as to ensure that all learners have "opportunities for frequent and meaningful student-to-teacher and student-to-student interaction, monitored practice, and individual feedback during instructional time."⁶¹ Although small classes are desirable at all levels of language study, they are especially important for younger beginning students, who learn language implicitly and experientially, and not through traditional "book-learning." Larger classes

⁵⁹ Compilations by the World Language Office, Jan. 2014.

⁶⁰ Note that classrooms in other subjects also exceed these student counts.

⁶¹ See <http://www.actfl.org/news/position-statements/maximum-class-size>.

can be effectively managed with older learners, but to teach language for proficiency in such a class, the teacher needs to have had professional training in creating a learner-centered learning environment, involving the use of small-group and pair tasks, activities and simulations. The addition of a teacher's aide who speaks the language is also extremely helpful in working with classes of 25 or more students. As ACTFL reports, "Where larger class sizes exist, teachers must be provided with additional support in order to maintain sound pedagogical practices."

If increased class sizes cannot be avoided for budgetary reasons, our committee recommends that all teachers receive professional development training in providing differentiated learning instruction to all students and that teachers of such classes be provided with aides who speak the language and know the culture. Moreover, all teachers need to learn how to employ technology effectively and facilitate project-based activities.⁶²

(iv) Disadvantaged Learners. There is a risk that an increase in class size would be an additional impediment to learning for students with disabilities. This is a topic we view as important to investigate in the coming months.

4. World Languages and Improvement of Reading Success.

Learning to read for the first time in any language requires familiarity with the linguistic sounds and structures of the language, the ways that ideas are put together in it, its vocabulary, and cultural patterns of life. Having that, they also need to learn how reading works and what it is "for." Children have access to the information about the language and culture in their first language, but, unless they are nearly bilingual, they have comparatively little access to it for a second or foreign language.⁶³ For these reasons, educators strongly recommend that children learn to read for the first time in their first language. They also recommend that the way to improve reading ability is by doing lots of extensive reading in topics of interest.⁶⁴

Once reading in the first language has been established, it is easier for children to learn to read in a second language, and, in fact, they are able to use reading to help build their general proficiency. That is, once children have learned to read in a language, they can begin to "read to learn" in that language. Reading well in one language supports reading in the other language(s). Arlington's excellent middle school Spanish

⁶² Even with the most well prepared teachers, however, smaller classes provide greater opportunities for language students to obtain feedback and attain functional proficiency in all competencies (speaking, listening, reading and writing).

⁶³ A great deal of research supports these claims. See especially the publications of Elizabeth Bernhardt (2010, 2000a, 200b, 1995, 1991); Grabe (2008); Lems & Soro (2009); and Taylor & Ysseldyke (2007), among many others.

⁶⁴ See, e.g., Hardy (2013) in *The Language Educator*, November: pp. 37-39. Also Krashen (2004), *The Power of Reading: Insights from Research*.

immersion program at Gunston School offers some concrete support for these points. Immersion students in grade 6 at Gunston do not take an English Reading course; it is felt that the extensive reading that they do in Spanish and English in the course of their regular subjects, including English and Spanish Language Arts, prepares them to read both languages well. And, indeed, the results of the 8th grade Standards of Learning tests in Reading and in all the other subjects appear to corroborate that belief, because at Gunston they are as high or, in many cases, higher than for 8th grade students at other schools. At the same time, the Spanish Reading results on the STAMP Test are also excellent, with 49% of the students reading at the Advanced level on the ACTFL proficiency scale and 46% at the Intermediate level.

5. Closing the Achievement Gap

Goal 2 of our school system's current strategic plan is to close the achievement gap, so that "all Arlington Public Schools students will meet high academic standards and achieve success regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, home or native language, disability, special learning needs, economic background, or other factors that should not be a predictor of success".⁶⁵

World Language Study and Other Subjects. As the WLAC has stated in previous reports, there is now a significant body of research literature documenting that taking time out of the school day to learn a WL does not hinder students' success in other areas of study. A comparison of SOL scores in Arlington between FLES schools and comparable non-FLES schools shows that finding to be true here, as well. Meanwhile, what some other recent research is beginning to show is that properly taught WL at early ages appears to be associated with narrowing of the gap on national tests of progress in core subjects.⁶⁶ Our committee is very interested in whether these results might be replicated in Arlington.

Beginning language study early. Published research into cognitive development has also established that learning a second (or third) language has many positive benefits for the learner, including improved executive function, innovative thinking, and cognitive flexibility.⁶⁷ There is also a likelihood that beginning to learn a WL in the elementary years, before the onset of puberty, may, if successful, provide students with the needed confidence to enroll in a WL in middle school. In turn, this could help students earn two of the required three WL credits for the Advanced Studies Diploma (ASD) and

⁶⁵ APS, Strategic Plan 2011-17: A Long-Range Plan for the Future, p. 8:

http://www.apsva.us/cms/lib2/VA01000586/Centricity/Domain/15/StrategicPlan11-17_web.pdf

⁶⁶ See, for example, C. Taylor and R. Lafayette (2010), Academic achievement through FLES: a Case for Promoting greater Access to Foreign Language Study Among Young Learners. *The Modern Language Journal* 94.

⁶⁷ See, for example, *The Benefits of Language Study*,

<http://www.ncssfl.org/papers/BenefitsSecondLanguageStudyNEA.pdf>. Also recent research by Kroll (2012) and Bialystok (2011: <http://www.apa.org/pubs/journals/features/cep-65-4-229.pdf>).

encourage continued language study in high school, which would improve their possibilities for employment or further study after high school.

At present, the number of African American, Hispanic, and low-income students who graduate with the ASD are 42.3%, 52.2%, and 50%, respectively. The comparable figure for white high school graduates in 2013 is 81.4%, with an average of 65.5% for all APS graduates.⁶⁸ About twice as high a proportion of white as black students attain this advanced diploma in Arlington schools. If the confidence to enroll in WL study in middle and high school could help close that gap, it would be significant.

Participation of African American students enrolled in higher-level WL courses and in AP/IB courses is also disproportionately low.⁶⁹ That, too, might well be improved through successful participation in elementary and middle school WL courses. The percentage of Hispanic students taking the AP Spanish for Fluent Speakers course and IB Spanish is high, however, and compares well with white student's participation in and scores from AP/IB WL.

- *Participation and Success of Minority Students in WL Courses.* We plan to analyze data on enrollments in middle and high school WL courses together with results of the STAMP tests for 8th grade Immersion students and those completing third year of High School language. We anticipate that comparing these data for minority and white students will allow us to see whether an achievement gap also exists within APS WL courses or not.

We are also interested in investigating the comparative success of black students (as documented in 5th grade assessments) in the FLES and immersion programs, who take required WL courses in those elementary schools that offer the programs.⁷⁰

- *Teaching Practices.* The importance of highly effective and flexible teaching practices in WL classrooms to ensure successful learning by every student was discussed at the School Board work session on world languages (Dec. 17, 2013). Our committee emphasizes the need for teachers to differentiate their instruction so as to meet the individual learning needs of each student and to follow well-established principles for developing functional language proficiency in young learners. Those needs can be addressed through continuing professional growth and development of our teachers.⁷¹

⁶⁸<http://www.apsva.us/cms/lib2/VA01000586/Centricity/Domain/4131/Table%20%20Diploma%20Rates%20092713.pdf> and <https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/reportcard/>

⁶⁹ This was discussed at the School Board work session on WL, Dec. 17, 2013. Aggregated data across subjects for AP exams are available here: http://www.apsva.us/cms/lib2/VA01000586/Centricity/Domain/12/AP_Exam%20_Results_table_1.pdf

⁷⁰ Some students, however, are pulled out of FLES classes for remediation in other subjects. If this is done frequently, such students undoubtedly lose the benefits of language learning.

⁷¹ Discussion in the School Board work session on WL (12/17/13) focused on teaching practices and that possibly not all of them are successful for African American children.

As we have stated earlier, the presence of a trained teacher's aide to help in the instruction of large classes makes it much more possible to address individual students' needs.

VI Committee Members:

Caroline Bosc, Chair, has a 17 year-old son attending Washington-Lee HS and a 13 year-old son attending Kenmore MS. Caroline teaches French at the Langley School in McLean. French is the primary language in her household.

Anh Bolles, Assistant Chair, has two multilingual children who are in the Spanish immersion program at Key Elementary School and Gunston Middle School. She studied Spanish in high school and grew up speaking Vietnamese.

Dr. Silke Reeves, Assistant Chair, has two children. Her youngest is a seventh grader beginning to learn French at Jefferson Middle School; the other is studying IB French at Washington-Lee HS. Silke is a native speaker of German, and her children are bilingual.

Dr. James Bauman, Ph.D. in Linguistics. Jim is retired from the Center for Applied Linguistics where he specialized in language testing. He is proficient in Dutch and Polish and has studied French, German, and Mandarin. He has no children.

Becky Cuthbertson is interested in students' language acquisition of both native (heritage) and foreign languages. She is a parent of an Arlington Public Schools graduate who learned Arabic in APS, with both distance learning and traditional "teacher-fronted" classroom settings.

Dr. Frederick Jackson, former chair, Ph.D. in Linguistics. Rick is proficient in Thai and Lao and has studied Chinese, French, German and Micronesian languages. He is recently retired Senior Research Associate from the National Foreign Language Center of the University of Maryland and the School of Language Studies, Foreign Service Institute. No young children.

Elliott Stroud has a second grader at McKinley Elementary School and a preschooler who will start Kindergarten at McKinley next school year. Elliott's children speak Mandarin Chinese and are also learning Spanish. McKinley Elementary benefits from the FLES program, a before-school student Spanish club and a PTA that has sponsored numerous International and WL related student activities.

Jennifer Vogel, ACI Liaison, has one child at Williamsburg MS and another at Arlington Science Focus. Speaks German. "I'm a CPA who worked for Pricewaterhouse-Coopers for 15 years before quitting to stay home with my children."

Valuable Practical Resources for Parents and Teachers

Berdan, Stacie Nevadomski, and Marshall S. Berdan. 2013. *Raising Bilingual Children*. Alexandria, VA: ACTFL.

Curtain, Helena, and Carol Ann Pesola Dahlberg. 2014. *Languages and Children: Making the Match: World Language Instruction in K-8 Classrooms and Beyond (5th Edition)*. Forthcoming as Pearson e-Book.

King, Kendall, and Alison Mackey. 2007. *The Bilingual Edge: Why, When and How to Teach Your Child a Second Language*. New York: HarperCollins.

VII Appendices

Appendix 1 --- Sixth Grade Program: World Language Choices

Middle School	World Language Choices ¹	#	Electives ²	
Gunston	1. Dual Immersion (students from Key & Claremont)	97		
	2. No proficiency-based language course for students rising from other elem. schools		Choice between 1. Instrumental Music 2. Exploratory Wheel: small units in Latin and French. Focus on the use of language across cultures, including body language, gestures, facial expressions, idioms around the world, slang, 24 days total.	
Jefferson	TS ³ 60 mins, one day per week in afternoon (ACT II), full year Prior proficiency required.	12	Choice between 1. Music (band, Orchestra, choir) 2. Exploratory wheel: French or Spanish, 9 weeks total.	
Kenmore	TS one semester (Reading in other semester). Some differentiation.	45	Choice between 1. Music (band, Orchestra, choir) 2. Exploratory wheel: includes WL, 23 days total.	
Swanson	TS every other day, alternating with English reading. Prior proficiency required. Only for those students reading at grade level. Some differentiation.	85	Choice between 1. Music (band, Orchestra, choir) 2. Exploratory wheel: no WL	
Williamsburg		62	Choice between 1. Music (band, Orchestra, choir) 2. Exploratory rotations incl. Latin. Students learn basic vocabulary. They also learn Latin root words for Romance languages, especially Spanish and French (derivatives), 6 weeks total.	
HB-Woodlawn	Intro to:	French	21	
		German	0	
		Latin	15	
		Spanish	14	
		TS	11	
SFS ⁴⁾	11			

Source: Data compiled by the World Languages Office – data for grade 6 of Sept. 18, 2013 and unofficial compilations of March 2014

- 1) Enrollment in Immersion, TS or another language course (at HBW). Does not include those taking language as part of an Exploratory Wheel.
- 2) Electives are full subjects, meeting every weekday for the full school year.
- 3) TS = Transitional Spanish: Non-proficiency oriented continuation of Spanish instruction for students rising from FLES or immersion programs or those passing a proficiency test.
- 4) SFS for 6th grade at HBW is a full year course for heritage and former immersion students.

Appendix 2

APS World Language Enrollments in Elementary School and 6th Grade						
		FLES/TS	Immersion	WL Total	No WL	Total
2013-14 SY ^{&}						
Grade 5 ^{&}		755	154	909	733	1642
		46%	9%	55%	45%	100%
Grade 6	GMS	0	97			
	JMS	12				
	KMS	45				
	SMS	85				
	WMS	62				
	HBW	11	11 ³⁾			
	Total	215	108	323		1592*
		14%	6%			100%
Continuing		28%¹⁾	70%	36%²⁾		
Total WL Participation Grade 6 (Includes Intro courses HBW: 50 students)				373⁵⁾	1219	1592*
				23%	77%	100%
2012-13 SY						
Grade 6 ⁺	Total	161	81	242	1269	1511
		10.66%	5.36%	16.02%	83.98%	100%
Continuing		23%¹⁾	62%	30%²⁾		
2011-12 SY						
Grade 6 ⁺	Total	130	114	244	1206	1450
		8.97%	7.86%	16.83%	83.17%	100%
Continuing ⁶⁾		24.2% ⁴⁾	65.90%	38.41% ⁵⁾		
2010-11 SY						
Grade 6 ⁺	Total	129	107	236	1177	1413
		9.1%	7.5%	16.70%	83.20%	100%
		28% ¹⁾	85%	41% ²⁾		

Sources: Data compiled by the World Languages Office – data for grade 6 of Sept. 18, 2013 and unofficial compilations of March 2014; older data: WLAC Report 2012-13, Appendix 4, p. 39. Enrollment data: APS Office for Planning and Evaluation, June and Sept., 2013: <http://www.apsva.us/Page/1110>

* Total grade 6 enrollment, incl. HBW, without Stratford Program (6 students)

& School years refer to grade 6 enrollment. SY 2013-14 reports data on students who are in grade 6 during the 2013-14 SY. Most but not all of these students were APS fifth graders in 2012-13, thus the fifth grade data refer to the 2012-13 SY and a slightly different cohort of students.

\$ This figure includes HBW 6th graders enrolled in Introductory French, Spanish and Latin (50 students). See also Table 1. WL classes at HBW together account for 72/1592 or almost 5% of 6th grade students.

+ Not including HBW students for earlier years.

1) Calculated as the ratio of students in sixth grade TS (215) out of the previous year's fifth grade FLES students (755). This is an approximate estimate – it overestimates the true share of students continuing, since immersion students (and others with proficiency) may have enrolled in TS. It underestimates the true share of students continuing with WL, as some students have left APS.

2) These are approximations. Calculation for 2013-14: 323/909 = 36%. True continuation may be lower, since not all students taking sixth grade Spanish (TS or immersion) are rising from APS (FLES or immersion) schools. And true continuation could have been higher, if students eligible to enroll in 6th grade WL had not left APS. Note the drop in enrollment between grades 5 and 6 this 2013-14 SY.

3) SFS for 6th grade – full year course for heritage and former immersion students. See also Appendix 1.

4) Of the 130 students taking TS in grade 6, only 101 came from FLES schools and are thus included in the reported 24.2% as continuing.

5) Of the 244 students taking sixth grade Spanish, 17 tested in from other schools and are thus not included in the percentage of continuing students. The 38.41% figure is based on 227 students (out of 591 students).

6) The continuation figures for the 2011-12 SY are exact. This is the only year where sufficient data were available about the composition of students in 6th grade TS courses.

Appendix 3 --- Middle School World Language Study: Grades 6, 7 and 8

Middle School	Enrollments			Taking Language	
	6	7	8	6	7+8
Gunston	287	260	250	97 (33.8%)	366 (71.8%)
Jefferson	276	298	260	12 (3.4%)	430 (77.1%)
Kenmore	290	250	269	45 (13.2%)	341 (65.7%)
Swanson	314	376	304	85 (21.93%)	500 (73.5%)
Williamsburg	352	328	321	62 (9.7%)	518 (79.8%)
H-B Woodlawn	73	75	76	72 (98.6%)	144 (95.4%)
Stratford	5	6	8		
Totals	1576	1466	1400	373 (23%)	2299 (80.2%)

Source: Compilation of the World Languages Office – WL data for grade 6 as of Sept. 18, 2013 and unofficial compilations as of March 2014. Enrollment data: APS Office for Planning and Evaluation, September, 2013: <http://www.apsva.us/Page/1110>

Appendix 4 --- Table 1
2013-14 Secondary School World Language Enrollments,
Together with Previous Three Years
[Based on Compilation by World Language Office, 09/13/2013]

Showing enrollments in WL courses in Grades 7-12 bearing high school credits. Sixth grade Transition Spanish and Immersion are not included.

		2010-11 ⁶	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
Level 1 ¹	HS	461	536	546	452
	MS	1140	1194	1220	1236
	Total	1601	1730	1766	1688
Level 2	HS	543	654	609	643
	MS	791	720	844	733
	Total	1334	1374	1453	1376
Level 3		928	1079	1067	1147
Level 4 ²		450	577	581	627
Level 5	Total	128	274	342	347
	Non – IB ³		257	222	235
	IB		17	120	112
Level 6 & up	Total	NA	66	169	232
	Non – IB ³		62	84	116
	IB		4	85	116
Spanish Immersion		NA			
MS Grade 7			83	105	74
MS Grade 8			80	76	95
Total MS Imm			163	181	169
HS Immersion I ⁴			46	34	34
HS Immers. II ⁴			13	0	12
Total HS Imm			59	34	46
Overall MS			2077	2245	2138
Overall HS			3246	3368	3494
Overall Total		4441	5323	5613	5632

- 1)Includes Language 1B courses at HBW until 2011-12
2)Includes German 4-AP
3)Includes Regular, AP, Spanish AP Literature 1-2
4)Includes Spanish High School Immersion I-II at Wakefield HS

Appendix 4 --- Table 2 --- High School WL Enrollments by Grade

Grade	# Students in WL	%	Enrollment
9	1309	84	1566
10	1197	80	1494
11	846	57	1475
12	423	30	1435
Total	3775	63	5970

Source: World Language enrollments data are from a compilation by the World Languages Office as of Jan. 2014. Overall HS enrollment data can be found at APS Office for Planning and Evaluation, June and Sept., 2013: <http://www.apsva.us/Page/1110>

Appendix 5 --- Remarks by WLAC chair, Caroline Bosc, to the School Board Work Session on World Languages, December 17, 2013

To the Members of the School Board,

On behalf of the WLAC committee that I chair, I would like to thank you for inviting us tonight. Several of my colleagues on the committee are also here.

We very much welcomed and appreciated the opportunity to collaborate with Marleny Perdomo on the development of the World Language Progressive Planning Model that has been presented to you.

We have worked hard with Marleny to seek constructive ways for our world language education programs to be enhanced and strengthened, while remaining mindful of the tight budgetary constraints and increasing student enrollments faced by our school system.

As you know, there has been a growing concern in our community that all students should have equitable opportunities to benefit from a full Arlington education. Our committee certainly shares that concern.

We commend the SB for your willingness to take steps to address the **systemic obstacles** to achieving the goals that are explicit in the School Board's value statement from three years ago. Your approval for the nine non-FLES schools to offer exploratory language instruction for 5th graders was a very welcome first step, as was your directive to the World Language Office to meet with us to develop the Progressive Planning Model.

We strongly support the recommendations developed in the PPM proposal for action in the coming school years that I will summarize here:

1. Starting in fall 2014, APS should re-commence implementing FLES programs in the nine elementary schools that do not offer regular K-5 language instruction. Ideally, no fewer than three schools would begin offering FLES in 2014, with the other schools scheduled for the next years.
2. At the same time, any elementary school without K-5 language instruction would continue to provide exploratory instruction to fifth grade students, as was begun this year.
3. Also starting in fall 2014, it is our strong opinion that all sixth grade students whose English reading abilities are at or above “level” should be able to enroll in one semester of World Language. Minimally, that semester should offer students both beginning and continuing proficiency-based Spanish, based on their abilities. Beyond the minimum, it would be very desirable to also offer beginning semesters of at least two other languages, such as French, Latin or Chinese. Please note that our recommendation in this matter is to address the sixth grade roadblock a year earlier than the version of the PPM that you have received. Without taking this step in 2014, the children coming out of our FLES programs and the new 5th grade exploratory course this year will be unable to continue with proficiency-oriented language. Moreover, these students still excluded from world languages in elementary school will continue to have to wait until the 7th grade.
4. To the extent the budget can possibly permit, APS would begin the necessary investment in upgraded technology for language study in sufficient quality and quantity that all language students would be able to use it to stimulate and enhance their learning. This is especially critical for students in language courses taught through virtual learning, but is also important for students in teacher-fronted classes, because modern materials make heavy use of technology. This updating also needs to continue in future years.

We are well aware of the financial constraints the School Board and our school system faces, but we also believe that the current, often fractured programs severely limit Arlington children’s advancement toward the goal of language proficiency, and discourage them in the process.

Once again, we would like to thank you for your always positive dialogue with us over the years, the cooperation shown by you and your staff and by the World Language team, and for your commitment to doing what is best for Arlington’s children. Again, we truly appreciate this opportunity to be included in this work session.

Thank you for listening to us.

Appendix 6 --- Enrollments in Languages offered by Distance Learning

Table 1 --- Enrollment by School: School Year 2013-14.

	GMS	JMS	KMS	SMS	WMS	HBW	WHS	W-L	YHS	Totals
Arabic I	6	15	5	4	4		13	12	4	63
Arabic II	3	6	3		3		3	13	2	33
Arabic III		1	1			1	10	7	2	22
Arabic IV							6	4	1	11
Arabic V								1	1	2
Total Arabic	9	22	9	4	7	1	32	37	10	131
Chinese I	5	10	5	10	13	3	3	3	3	55
Chinese II	5	8	7	6	8		6	2	9	51
Chinese III						1	7	14	10	32
Chinese IV						1	1	7	8	17
Chinese V-AP						2		2	2	6
Total Chinese	10	18	12	16	21	7	17	28	32	161
German I						1	6	5	9	21
German II						6	7	8	14	45
German III						5	2	1	4	12
German IV						3	1	2	5	11
German IV-AP						2		2		4
German V-AP						1		1		2
Total German						18	16	19	32	85
Japanese I						3	16	13	11	43
Japanese II						3		11	3	17
Japanese III						1		1	1	3
Total Japanese						7	16	25	15	63
Latin I	8	16*	8				6			22
Latin II	4	8	1				3			16
Latin III							5			5
Latin IV							1			1
Total Latin	12	8	9				15			44
Total APS Distance Learning										484

Source: Pat Teske, Handout at the School Board Work Session WL, Dec. 17, 2013

Notes:

* Taught with a face to face teacher. Not counted in distance learning totals.

Appendix 6. Table 2 --- Enrollment by Languages and Levels

	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
Arabic 1 MS	21	25	27	30
Arabic 2 MS	3	12	14	15
Arabic 1	30	33	21	33
Arabic 2	10	23	21	22
Arabic 3	4	11	3	22
Arabic 4	4	2	10	12
Arabic 5		2	0	3
Total Arabic	72	108	112	137
Chinese 1 MS	35	34	53	48
Chinese 2 MS	10	19	17	36
Chinese 3 MS		2		1
Chinese 1	36	33	32	12
Chinese 2	12	20	31	22
Chinese 3	12	11	26	32
Chinese 4	5	4	9	19
AP Chinese 5		2	4	4
Total Chinese	110	125	172	174
German 1 MS		1		
German 2 MS	36	10		
German 1	38	43	41	29
German 2		24	24	31
German 3	24	26	21	14
German 4, 4-AP	13	11	10	12
German 5-AP, 6	4	6	4	2
Total German	115	121	100	88
Japanese 1		22	28	41
Japanese 2		14	7	17
Japanese 3		17	8	4
Japanese 4			4	
Total Japanese		53	47	62

Source: Compilation by Arlington Public Schools World Language Office, Sept. 18, 2013

Notes: not including enrollments in German 1A,1B for 6th graders at HBW (2011-12).

Appendix 7 --- Class Sizes in French and Spanish Classes¹

Course	Middle Schools					High Schools				
	#	AVG	Min	Max	# 27+	#	AVG	Min	Max	# 27+
French I	16	20	11	27	1	4 *	17	11	24	
French II	10	20	8	27	1	5	15	1	23	
French III						11	22	1	28	2 \$
French IV						6	22	17	24	
French 5 & up						17	7	1	17	
Spanish I	28	23	18	27	2 \$	9	25	21	27	1
Spanish II	16	22	12	29	3 \$	13	24	19	27	1 \$
Spanish III						22	24	12	29	3 \$
Spanish IV						10	24	10	28	2 \$
Spanish V & up						21	10	1	28	1
Immersion 6	5	19	14	28	1 \$					
Immersion 7	4	18	17	19						
Immersion 8	5	19	15	23						
Immersion I						2	17.5	14	21	
Immersion II						1	12	12	12	
SFS I	7	17	9	25		1	20	20	20	
SFS II	6	10	4	18		5	17	10	24	
SFS III						7	23	11	29	2 \$
SFS IV						5	27	24	30	3
SFS V & up						8	10	2	26	

Source: Arlington Public Schools, Report on 2013-14 Class Size, January, 2014.

Notes:

\$ Figure is a lower bound, since the Class Size Report only presents summary statistics.

* includes two classes at Wakefield that have recently been formed out of one large class of 33
1) without H-B-Woodlawn Secondary Program