

## **Best Practices in Language Immersion Programming at the Secondary School Level**

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In this report, The Hanover Research Council identifies successful practices in administering the continuation of a language immersion program from the elementary to the secondary school level. Through case studies, we examine the organization and structure of language immersion programs in public middle and high schools across the United States, including several in Minnesota. Our examination of these programs is grounded in an analysis of language immersion programs drawn from scholarly articles and education research organizations.

## Overview of Language Immersion in Secondary Schools

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### Key Terms and Definitions

Although there are many different types of language immersion programs, the Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition (CARLA) at the University of Minnesota constructs a useful general definition for language immersion. According to this definition, an immersion program involves two languages: a *majority language*, the language spoken by the majority of people in a given regional or national context; and a *minority language* or target language, a language other than the one spoken by a regional or national majority. CARLA defines language immersion education by the following characteristics:<sup>1</sup>

- ❖ Promotes additive bilingualism by providing sustained and enriched instruction through both the minority and majority languages
- ❖ Provides subject area instruction in the minority language for *at least 50 percent of the school day* at the elementary level, and for *at least two year-long courses* in secondary school
- ❖ Instructors are fully proficient in both languages
- ❖ Strong support for majority language-speaking students in the community at large and strong home support for minority language-speaking students
- ❖ Clear and sustained separation of the languages during instructional time<sup>2</sup>

Beyond these defining characteristics, immersion programs can take different forms. In “full” or “total” immersion programs, 100 percent of the school curriculum is taught in the minority language in the early grades, including the students’ first instruction in reading. Language arts and reading instruction in the majority language are typically introduced in the second grade for 20 percent of the school day, and that percentage increases by year until instruction time is split evenly between the two languages by the 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> grade.

By contrast, “partial” immersion programs limit the curriculum instruction through the minority language to about 50 percent of the school day in all grade levels; in partial immersion programs, students learn to read in both languages at the same time.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition: Immersion Programs. “Frequently Asked Questions about Immersion Education.” <http://www.carla.umn.edu/immersion/FAQs.html>

<sup>2</sup> Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition: 2008 Immersion Conference. “What is language immersion education?” <http://www.carla.umn.edu/conferences/past/immersion2008/terms.html>

<sup>3</sup> Brondum, Jack and Nancy Stenson. February 1998. “Types of Immersion Education: An Introduction.” *ACIE Newsletter*, Vol. 1, No. 2. [http://www.carla.umn.edu/immersion/acie/vol1/Feb1998\\_ImmersionTypes.html](http://www.carla.umn.edu/immersion/acie/vol1/Feb1998_ImmersionTypes.html)

Another type of immersion program is “two-way” or “dual” immersion, which involves instruction in two languages for a student population consisting of majority and minority native language speakers, and which encourages bilingualism for both groups. Dual immersion programs involve an equal amount of instructional time in both languages, while in “one-way” immersion programs most of the curriculum is taught in the target language, which is a second language for all students.<sup>4</sup> In some cases, a third language is added into the immersion curriculum as an additional area of focus for bilingual students.<sup>5</sup> Unless otherwise specified, this report will describe one-way immersion programs.

Since the establishment of the first language immersion program in a U.S. public elementary school in 1971,<sup>6</sup> immersion education has proliferated in school districts across the country as an effective method of foreign language instruction. Students of partial and total immersion programs demonstrate higher levels of language proficiency than students who learned languages in traditional foreign language classes,<sup>7</sup> and some evidence suggests more advanced development of important cognitive skills among immersion learners when compared to other students.<sup>8</sup>

According to the Center for Applied Linguistics, over 300 foreign language immersion programs currently exist in the United States, including those in private and independent schools and teaching multiple languages. The majority of these programs appear to operate at the elementary school level, with relatively fewer schools extending immersion instruction through high school.<sup>9</sup> While research has shown that the positive effects of immersion education are enhanced when students enroll in longer term programs, the articulation of a successful K-12 immersion program can be a complex process for school districts to undertake.<sup>10</sup>

In this report, The Hanover Research Council aims to identify successful practices in organizing, structuring, and supporting these programs (full or partial immersion) in secondary schools. With this objective in mind, the next section provides a summary of key findings, followed by a series of institutional profiles of public middle schools, high schools, and districts observed in our research, which included phone interviews with program administrators and a review of information available on program websites, as well as scholarly articles written by program staff or researchers.

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<sup>4</sup> “Frequently Asked Questions about Immersion Education.” Op. cit.

<sup>5</sup> Nelson-Maurer, Tracy. May 2008. “First Spanish, Then Chinese: Expanding Elementary Language Learning Opportunities.” *ACIE Newsletter*. Vol. 11, No. 3.

[http://www.carla.umn.edu/immersion/acie/vol11/no3/may08\\_bestpractices.html](http://www.carla.umn.edu/immersion/acie/vol11/no3/may08_bestpractices.html)

<sup>6</sup> “Frequently Asked Questions about Immersion Education.” Op. cit.

<sup>7</sup> Brondum, Jack. Op. cit.

<sup>8</sup> Fortune, Tara W. and Diane Tedick. “What Parents Want to Know About Foreign Language Immersion Programs.” Center for Applied Linguistics. <http://www.cal.org/resources/digest/0304fortune.html>

<sup>9</sup> Center for Applied Linguistics. “Directory of Foreign Language Immersion Programs in U.S. Schools.” <http://www.cal.org/resources/immersion/ImmersionList.aspx>

<sup>10</sup> Barr-Harrison, Pat. May 1998. “K-12 Immersion Programs: Articulation and Implementation.” *ACIE Newsletter*. Vol. 1, No. 3. [http://www.carla.umn.edu/immersion/acie/vol1/May1998\\_K12Immersion.html](http://www.carla.umn.edu/immersion/acie/vol1/May1998_K12Immersion.html)

## **Best Practices in K-12 Articulation of Language Immersion Programs**

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While language immersion education programs are relatively well established among public elementary schools in the United States, the full articulation of K-12 immersion programs presents a new challenge. Of the 310 language immersion programs recognized in 2006 by the Center for Applied Linguistics, 89 programs were in middle schools and only 37 existed at the high school level.<sup>11</sup> In secondary schools, immersion programs face many challenges: finding qualified teachers and adequate materials, meeting state curricular standards and graduation requirements, filling classes, addressing scheduling concerns, and establishing a budget. Additionally, the demanding process of extending an immersion program must gain support from parents, schools, and districts before it can even begin.

In this section, we identify common and successful practices in the administration of immersion programs at secondary schools to address the above-mentioned challenges. This information is drawn from institutional profiles of the following nine schools and districts operating language immersion programs at the secondary level:

- ❖ Académie Lafayette (MO)
- ❖ Edina Public School District (MN)
- ❖ Madawaska School Department (ME)
- ❖ Metropolitan School District of Lawrence Township (IN)
- ❖ Portland School District (OR)
- ❖ Prince George's County Public Schools (MD)
- ❖ Robbinsdale Public School District (MN)
- ❖ Saint Louis Park Public School District (MN)
- ❖ Saint Paul Public School District (MN)

### **Key Findings**

Summarized below are the major findings of this report, which collectively seek to address how secondary schools handle common challenges associated with offering a language immersion program.

#### **❖ How do districts organize faculty and course selection in immersion programs at the secondary level?**

While many elementary language immersion programs function as stand-alone language academies, secondary continuations of these programs are usually organized as a curricular track or option within a traditional school. Students take less of their

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<sup>11</sup> Lenker, Ashley and Nancy Rhodes. 2007. "Foreign Language Immersion Programs Features and Trends Over 35 Years." Center for Applied Linguistics. <http://www.cal.org/resources/digest/flimmersion.html>

courses in the target language than in elementary school, and move to more specialized curricula in subjects like math and science, especially at the high school level. At the middle school level, all programs studied in this report require immersion students to take between two and four courses taught in the target language, usually comprising about 30 to 60 percent of the school day. In high school, immersion students take one or two immersion courses per term.

Because language immersion programs are incorporated into the regular curriculum of secondary schools, faculty are often shared between the immersion program and other subjects. In most cases, immersion teachers will also teach language courses to non-immersion students or teach regular courses in the subject area in which they instruct in the immersion language, such as teaching social studies courses in both English and French.

At the middle school level, course selection within immersion programs is generally dependent on that of the regular curriculum. In nearly all of the examined programs, middle school immersion courses mirror core courses taught in English. Middle school immersion students complete courses in social studies, language arts, and less frequently, math and science that meet district standards for these core subjects, though they are taught in the target language.

In high school, immersion courses usually count towards graduation requirements as elective credits. Many of the high schools profiled in this report offer credit for immersion courses through Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate academic recognition programs. In other cases, immersion students are moved into regular advanced language courses alongside non-immersion students demonstrating comparable skills. In programs offering or requiring courses not affiliated with Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate, immersion courses at the high school level often include electives studying the literature, art, history and culture of regions where the target language is spoken.

#### ❖ **How are graduation expectations met by the immersion curriculum?**

Because immersion courses at the middle school level are generally modeled on the English versions of core subject classes, they fulfill the same district requirements. Teachers and administrators carefully construct the immersion curriculum to align with that of the same course taught in English. Sometimes, teachers in these content areas are required to hold a license to teach that subject in addition to demonstrating a high level of proficiency in the target language. In the case of the French immersion program at Prince George's County Public Schools, one middle school course is reserved for immersion students to study a third language; students may also take an elective class like music in the immersion language.

High school immersion courses help students meet expectations for graduation by counting for credit as elective or world language courses, depending on the specific requirements of the district. Other core subjects required for graduation, such as mathematics, science, or social studies, are usually not taught through immersion courses at this level. This is likely due to the complexity and specialization of courses in core subjects in higher grades, as well as the added priority during these years of preparing for college application, when most postsecondary institutions value performance in traditionally taught core courses over foreign language skills. For example, students hoping to attend a technical college are unlikely to take a Spanish immersion version of a course in calculus out of the concern that, due to translation issues, the two would not be equivalent. Lawrence North High School, part of the Spanish immersion program in the Metropolitan School District of Lawrence Township, represents one exception to this rule because two of the school's Spanish immersion courses fulfill social studies requirements. Generally, instead of representing core courses, higher level immersion courses frequently deliver credit within the Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate programs, preparing students for the Advanced Placement test or helping them earn an International Baccalaureate diploma. In all examined programs, the number of immersion courses required by students to remain in the program is fewer at the high school level than in middle school.

### ❖ How are staff recruited?

Some schools operate overseas recruitment programs for teachers or assistant teachers of language immersion courses, either working independently or with common programs. The Edina Public School District employs the help of the Extended French Booster Club, an organization of parents that sponsors an exchange for teaching assistants from French-speaking countries to work in Edina immersion classrooms for one school year.<sup>12</sup> Similarly, Oya Ko Nai, the parent organization supporting the Japanese Magnet Program in Portland Public Schools, brings teaching aides from Japan to instruct immersion students each year through its intern program.<sup>13</sup>

Other teaching exchange programs featured in this report include that of the Amity Institute and the International Spanish Academy Project. The Amity Institute is a nonprofit foundation that organizes teaching exchanges for instructors from foreign countries to work as teaching assistants in U.S. immersion classrooms. Exchange teachers work at the primary or secondary level, and can remain in their assignment for up to three years.<sup>14</sup> A project of Spain's Department of Education and Science, the International Spanish Academy Project partners with Spanish language schools in

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<sup>12</sup> Edina Public Schools: Valley View Middle School. "Parents." <http://www.edina.k12.mn.us/valleyview/parents/index.html>

<sup>13</sup> Oya No Kai. "Community – Interns." <http://www.oyanokai.org/community/interns.html>

<sup>14</sup> Amity Institute. "Exchange Teachers Frequently Asked Questions." <http://www.amity.org/etfaq.html#3>

the United States and Canada to facilitate recruiting and support for visiting teachers who work with assigned schools for up to three years.<sup>15</sup>

Of teachers already in the United States, certain qualities are typically sought by recruiters for immersion programs. All program representatives interviewed for this report emphasized that immersion teachers should be extremely proficient in the target language, demonstrating native-like abilities in the language if they are not native speakers. At Saint Paul Public Schools, a representative of the language immersion program also specified that immersion teachers must be equally proficient in English if they are native speakers of the target language. As part of the hiring process in this district, immersion teacher candidates for whom English is a second language must demonstrate their English proficiency through a writing exercise.<sup>16</sup> Program representatives also mentioned that immersion teachers should have experience teaching children in the United States, and in teaching the applicable subject area, if the candidate is not a licensed teacher in that subject area.

### ❖ **How are materials chosen?**

In immersion courses that are meant to be versions of traditionally taught core courses, such as are frequently taught at the middle school level, instructors aim to choose materials that are identical to what is used in the original course. For commonly taught languages like Spanish and French, this is becoming easy to accomplish. Bilingual textbooks, or textbooks printed identically in another language, are increasingly common for Spanish and French. As immersion programs become more common, districts and states that administer textbook adoption for their secondary schools have begun considering the availability of bilingual editions when choosing course materials.

Elective courses in immersion, commonly taught at the high school level, frequently feature subject matter in arts, world culture, and literature. Finding language-specific materials for these kinds of courses is often simpler than finding translated textbooks; instructors can usually teach from novels, plays, or films that are readily available in the target language, or from foreign textbooks. Additionally, many immersion courses at the high school level are affiliated with Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate programs, which may have already developed established lists of appropriate course materials in the target language.

Several representatives of immersion programs profiled in this report mentioned that their schools use some course materials from foreign countries, developed originally for native speakers of the target language. The Lawrence Township Public School District frequently receives Spanish language textbooks from Spain through its

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<sup>15</sup> Spanish Ministry of Education and Science. "The ISA Concept."  
<http://www.educacion.es/exterior/usa/en/programs/isas/concept.shtml>

<sup>16</sup> Bernal, Heidi. Saint Paul Public Schools. Telephone Interview. April 22, 2010.

partnership with the country's International Spanish Academy Project.<sup>17</sup> Robbinsdale Area School District also employs course materials from other countries, and has experienced some discrepancy between the target language skills demanded by textbooks designed for native speakers and those of immersion students.<sup>18</sup>

## **Case Studies**

### **Académie Lafayette (MO)**

*Students:* 435<sup>19</sup>

Académie Lafayette is a public charter school overseen by the Kansas City Missouri School District with a K-8 partial immersion curriculum in French. Like other immersion programs, students learn most subjects entirely in French, including mathematics, science, physical education, social studies, and art. Students receive 30 minutes of instruction in English each day at the kindergarten level and 50 minutes each day beginning at 2<sup>nd</sup> grade.<sup>20</sup>

#### *Program Structure and Curriculum*

Like many other immersion programs at the elementary school level, Académie Lafayette operates as a stand-alone language academy overseen by its public school district. Unlike most programs profiled in this report, the total immersion academy extends through the middle school years. After finishing 8<sup>th</sup> grade at Académie Lafayette, many students participate in advanced French courses at area public, private, and charter schools; currently, no specific high school language program serves as an extension of the immersion curriculum at Académie Lafayette.<sup>21</sup>

The middle school program at Académie Lafayette begins with the 6<sup>th</sup> grade. In all years of the middle school program, students take courses in mathematics, French and English communication arts in reading and writing, social studies and science, as well as physical education, and art.<sup>22</sup> Appropriate grade level expectations are required of students in the following core subjects during the middle school years. The communication arts subject areas are taught in both French and English.

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<sup>17</sup> Morita, Tricia. Metropolitan School District of Lawrence Township. Telephone Interview. April 21, 2010.

<sup>18</sup> Neumann, John. Robbinsdale Public School District. Telephone Interview. April 27, 2010.

<sup>19</sup> All statistical information regarding schools and districts cited in this report including number of students, number of schools, district type and locale is credited to the National Center for Education Statistics, available at <http://nces.ed.gov/>

<sup>20</sup> Académie Lafayette. "Curriculum Overview." <http://www.academielifayette.org/curriculum>

<sup>21</sup> Académie Lafayette. "FAQ." <http://www.academielifayette.org/faq>

<sup>22</sup> Académie Lafayette. "Staff Directory." [http://www.academielifayette.org/staff\\_directory/](http://www.academielifayette.org/staff_directory/)

- ❖ *Categories of Topics for Grades 6-8*
  - Mathematics
    - Numbers and Operations
    - Algebraic Relationships
    - Geometric and Spatial Relationships
    - Measurement
    - Data and Probability
  - Communication Arts: Reading
    - Phonics
    - Fluency
    - Vocabulary
    - Comprehension Methods: Pre-reading and Post-reading
    - Making Connections
    - Text Features and Structures
    - Literary Techniques and Elements
  - Communication Arts: Writing
    - Application of a Writing Process
    - Audience and Purpose
    - Ideas and Contents
    - Organization and Sentence Structure
    - Word Choice
    - Conventions in Written Text
  - Science
    - Properties and Principles of Matter and Energy
    - Properties and Principles of Force and Motion
    - Characteristics and Interactions of Living Organisms
    - Changes in Ecosystems and Interactions of Organisms with their Environment
    - Scientific Inquiry
    - Impact of Science, Technology and Human Activity<sup>23</sup>

### *Staffing and Course Materials*

Six instructors teach only at the middle school level at Académie Lafayette, including teachers in science, mathematics, French, social studies, and English communication arts, as well as a coordinator of academic support programs. Two of the six instructors hail from French-speaking countries; all six hold advanced degrees and have traveled or taught abroad in Francophone countries, or taught English as a Second Language.<sup>24</sup> Classes at Académie Lafayette contain between 18 and 22 students.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Académie Lafayette. "Sixth Grade Curriculum." <http://www.academielafayette.org/node/84>

<sup>24</sup> "Staff Directory." Op. cit.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

### **Edina Public School District (MN)**

*Schools:* 11

*Type:* Local school district

*Students:* 7,856

*Locale:* Suburb, large

Edina Public School District operates a K-12 language immersion program in French. The program begins at Normandale Elementary French Immersion School and continues through the Extended French program at Valley View Middle School and Edina High School. Approximately 100 students enter the program in kindergarten each year. As a total immersion program, students learn the school curriculum entirely in French for the first several years of elementary school until the gradual integration of English language arts instruction.<sup>26</sup>

#### *Program Structure and Curriculum*

After completing fifth grade at Normandale Elementary School, immersion students interested in continuing the bilingual curriculum enter the Extended French program at Valley View Middle School, serving grades 6-9. In the middle school years, the immersion curriculum offers a structured set of mandatory courses in French language arts and social studies complementing English courses in English language arts, reading, science and other electives. The following French courses are required for middle school students in grades 6-9 of the immersion program.

#### ❖ *Grade 6*

- French Language Arts
- Social Studies
- Mathematics (Everyday Math or Transition Math)
- Positive Transitions: course focusing on effective study skills, organization and test-taking methods

#### ❖ *Grade 7*

- French Language Arts
- French in the Arts
- French Culture 7

#### ❖ *Grade 8*

- French Language Arts
- Social Studies

#### ❖ *Grade 9*

- French Language Arts *or* Enriched French IV Immersion
- French Culture 9<sup>27</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Edina Public Schools: Normandale Elementary. "About Our School."

<http://www.edina.k12.mn.us/normandale/ourschool/index.html>

<sup>27</sup> PUNCHARD, Isa. "Valley View Middle School Extended French Program Grade 6-9."

<http://www.edina.k12.mn.us/valleyview/academics/extfrench/index.html>

After middle school, French immersion students enter into advanced classes offered through Edina High School's regular language curriculum. At the 10<sup>th</sup> grade level, students will enroll either in Enriched French IV or Advanced Placement French V depending on skill level. Students taking Enriched French IV will go on to take Advanced Placement French V. After Advanced Placement French V, students can take one or both of the final advanced French courses: Advanced Placement French VI or French in the Modern World, a cinema course reserved for senior students.<sup>28</sup>

### *Staffing*

The Extended French program at Valley View Middle School employs eight instructors: five teaching grade 6, and one instructor teaching each level for grades 7, 8 and 9.<sup>29</sup> The French department at Edina High School consists of two teachers.<sup>30</sup>

One unique feature of the staffing model for Valley View Middle School's immersion program is the Extended French Booster Club, an extension of the Parent Teacher Organization for Normandale Elementary and the middle school. This parent group aims to support the unique needs of the French immersion program, primarily by sponsoring a teaching trainee exchange program for Valley View Middle School. Through the program, each year five or six teacher trainees from France are recruited through a rigorous selection process and employed as assistant teachers under the regular immersion instructors. All expenses of the exchange, including a stipend for the trainee, housing, visa processing, and health insurance are paid by the Booster Club, which collects dues from its members and organizes fundraisers throughout the year. In the classroom, teacher trainees provide support for teachers as well as an additional cultural experience for students, particularly important as their French classroom time in middle school is reduced from the near-complete immersion of the elementary program.<sup>31</sup>

### **Madawaska School District (ME)**

*Schools:* 2

*Type:* Local school district

*Students:* 610

*Locale:* Rural, fringe

The two-way French immersion program in Madawaska School District was launched in 1995 as a means to maintain the French language in this historically French/Acadian region of Maine. As a dual immersion program, the immersion

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Edina Public Schools. "Extended French."

<http://www.edina.k12.mn.us/valleyview/academics/extfrench/index.html>

<sup>30</sup> Edina Public Schools. "Staff Directory."

<http://www.edina.k12.mn.us/site/phonedir/staffdirectory.cfm?SiteNum=10>

<sup>31</sup> "Parents." Op. cit.

curriculum involves instruction in French for between 30 and 70 percent of classroom time depending on the grade level.<sup>32</sup>

### *Program Structure and Curriculum*

The K-12 dual immersion program in French is structured as an optional program for students in Madawaska Elementary and Middle/High Schools, and coexists with the traditional school curriculum in these buildings. The French immersion program occupies one classroom in each grade level from kindergarten through 9<sup>th</sup> grade. Although French language instruction is part of the regular core curriculum of Madawaska public schools, the immersion program provides special focus on listening, reading, and speaking skills for fluency in the language. Reading, writing, and mathematics are taught in French at most grade levels, and social studies, science, and art are also available in French-taught courses in some grades.<sup>33</sup>

Students have the option of enrolling in the immersion program at the beginning of every school year from kindergarten to 8<sup>th</sup> grade, and high school students may sign up for immersion courses during each registration period. Students are required to remain within the program for at least the year that they sign up for, but may enter and leave the program from year to year. The number of spots in immersion classes for each grade level is determined the spring before each school year in a collaborative decision by the school principals, the superintendent, and the School Committee; if the number of students wishing to enroll in a grade level exceeds the program capacity, preference is given to students who were previously enrolled. The School Committee has the ability to cancel any classes which fail to enroll at least ten students.<sup>34</sup>

### *Staffing and Extracurricular Opportunities*

The staff of the dual immersion program at Madawaska public schools receive many opportunities for professional development through college courses on topics in bilingual education and language acquisition, offered by the University of Maine, University of Southern Maine, and Université Laval in Quebec. These courses have been subsidized by the school district and several immersion grants. Extracurricular and enrichment opportunities are also available to students through the Summer Immersion Camp, a French summer program for students in grades K-8.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Lunney, Mary, Tom Scott and Tim Noak. "Two-Way French Immersion in Rural Maine." *ACIE Newsletter*. Vol. 5, No. 1. [http://www.carla.umn.edu/immersion/acie/vol5/Nov2001\\_RuralMaine.html](http://www.carla.umn.edu/immersion/acie/vol5/Nov2001_RuralMaine.html)

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Madawaska School Department. February 2001. "French Immersion Program." <http://www.madawaskaschools.org/district/policy/Pol.%20IHBE%20French%20Immersion%20Program%20021401.pdf>

<sup>35</sup> Lunney, Mary. Op. cit.

### **Metropolitan School District of Lawrence Township (IN)**

*Schools:* 18

*Type:* Local school district

*Students:* 16,153

*Locale:* Suburb, large

The Lawrence Township Public School District began its involvement in language immersion education in 1994 with the establishment of the Spanish Immersion Program at Forest Glen Elementary School. Adding one grade level each year, the program was expanded to Craig Middle School and Lawrence North High School, to become one of the limited number of fully articulated K-12 immersion programs in the country.<sup>36</sup>

#### *Program Structure and Curriculum*

Spanish immersion in Lawrence Township is currently a one-way program through which a student population of mostly native English speakers learns Spanish as a second language. The program enrolls 50 new students each year in a kindergarten class. Following the traditional full immersion model, all curricular materials are taught in Spanish for the first several years of elementary school and English teaching is gradually phased in. At the secondary school level, immersion students take half of their academic courses in Spanish, beginning with their entrance into 6<sup>th</sup> grade at Craig Middle School. Middle school courses within the immersion program include core courses in social studies, science, and language arts. In 9<sup>th</sup> grade, immersion students enter Lawrence North High School, where they have the opportunity to take Spanish-taught courses in social studies, language arts, and literature.<sup>37</sup> Students may also earn credit from completing an overseas experience program during a summer after 10<sup>th</sup> grade. The program is organized through the Malaca Institute in Malaga, Spain, and involves a home stay, course work, and travel to Madrid, Toledo, and Granada.<sup>38</sup>

The Spanish immersion program at Craig Middle School and Lawrence North High School is carefully designed to meet state education requirements by being similar in curriculum to English-taught core courses. Completion of the Spanish immersion program requires completion of the Spanish versions of core courses in social studies, science, and language arts; all Spanish courses are closely aligned with state standards.<sup>39</sup> Immersion program students at Lawrence North High School must take 12 credits within the Spanish immersion curriculum, including four required courses and two chosen electives. Descriptions of the required courses, drawn from the 2009-2010 Lawrence North High School course catalog, are listed below.

<sup>36</sup> Carr, Mary. May 2003. "Continuing Spanish Immersion at Lawrence North High School." *ACIE Newsletter*. Vol. 6, No. 3. [http://www.carla.umn.edu/immersion/acie/vol6/May2003\\_LawrenceN.html](http://www.carla.umn.edu/immersion/acie/vol6/May2003_LawrenceN.html)

<sup>37</sup> Morita, Tricia. Op. cit.

<sup>38</sup> Lawrence North High School. "2009-2010 Curriculum Guide," p. 2. <http://lawrencenorth.ltschools.org/files/lawrencenorth/file/academics/CurriculumGuide2009-10indd.pdf>

<sup>39</sup> Morita, Tricia. Op. cit.

- ❖ Spanish Immersion I: This course reviews previously learned language structures and focuses on writing and vocabulary to enhance ability in the language.
- ❖ Spanish Immersion II: In this course, students expand abilities in written and oral communication through presentations, essays, reading and listening exercises. This course should prepare students to take the Advanced Placement language exam in Spanish.
- ❖ World Cultures: This course examines various cultures around the world to introduce students to their place within the global community. It fulfills social studies requirements for graduation.
- ❖ Culture and Diversity: Also fulfilling social studies requirements, this course explores the cultures and diversity of Spanish and Latin American countries, covering geography, art and architecture, contemporary life, folklore and film.<sup>40</sup>

Additionally, students choose two courses from elective programs including Spanish Language and Culture through Theater, International Baccalaureate Spanish courses, Advanced Placement Spanish literature, or cadet teaching, a teaching opportunity at the district elementary school involved in the immersion program.<sup>41</sup>

Because of its small size and growing popularity, the immersion program is unable to offer admission to all applicants. Siblings of current students receive preference in the admissions process to the program.<sup>42</sup> The school district plans to expand the size of the immersion program in the coming years with the addition of a linked program in dual immersion that would serve an additional class of 50 students. Currently, one class of kindergarten students is involved in the dual immersion program, which serves K-2 and is expected to add one grade level each year through high school. Eventually, the one-way and dual immersion programs will be merged together at the middle school level. According to a representative from the school district, the need for a dual immersion program is due to the growing enrollment of native Spanish speakers, causing the existing program already to resemble a dual model.<sup>43</sup>

### *Staffing and Course Materials*

The Spanish immersion program shares faculty with the general World Languages departments at both schools, which offer traditional language classes at middle and high school levels. All faculty of the Spanish immersion program are native or near-

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<sup>40</sup> "Curriculum Guide 2009-2010." Op. cit. p.30.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid. p.2.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

native speakers of the language, and several each year come to Lawrence Township from Spanish-speaking countries abroad through an exchange program organized by the International Spanish Academy project. This language education initiative of the Ministry of Education and Science in Spain facilitates recruitment of visiting international teachers at Lawrence Township schools and organizes teaching fellowships for up to three years.<sup>44</sup> One or two visiting instructors per year are involved in the immersion program, usually teaching at the secondary school level.<sup>45</sup> Because of the small size of the Spanish immersion program, immersion teachers are expected to also teach courses outside of the program. For example, a Spanish immersion course instructor may also teach a traditional Spanish language course and a beginning course in English as a Second Language.<sup>46</sup>

The school district's partnership with the International Spanish Academy project is also useful for obtaining course materials for the Spanish immersion program. This initiative provides textbooks from Spain that cover applicable secondary school curriculum materials and are printed in Spanish. In many cases, teachers visiting through the International Spanish Academy can be helpful in finding other relevant Spanish course materials. Spanish versions of basic curriculum textbooks approved by the Indiana department of education are generally found by the school district.<sup>47</sup>

### **Portland School District (OR)**

*Schools:* 97

*Type:* Local school district

*Students:* 46,262

*Locale:* City, large

Founded in 1989, the Japanese Magnet Program in the Portland Public School District offers a partial immersion program in the language extending from kindergarten through high school. Students begin the program through the K-5 immersion curriculum at Richmond Elementary School, and may continue with the language at Mount Tabor Middle School and Grant High School.<sup>48</sup>

#### *Program Structure and Curriculum*

At the elementary school level, students are instructed in Japanese for half of each day, receiving lessons in literacy, math, science, social studies, music, and art in both languages. Students who choose to continue the immersion program after fifth grade move on to Taborsan, an instructional team or "lodge" at Mount Tabor Middle School that provides a community for students and teachers involved in the program. Immersion students at Mount Tabor receive instruction in Japanese for approximately a third of their day, including classes in social studies and language.

<sup>44</sup> "The ISA Concept." Op. cit.

<sup>45</sup> Morita, Tricia. Op. cit.

<sup>46</sup> Carr, Mary. Op. cit.

<sup>47</sup> Morita, Tricia. Op. cit.

<sup>48</sup> Richmond Elementary School. "Richmond Japanese Magnet Program." <http://www.richmondjmp.org/jmp.html>

This instructional team also leads courses in all other subjects, including science, mathematics, language arts, and an elective period.<sup>49</sup>

In grades 9-12 at Grant High School, students of the Japanese Magnet Program take one or two courses per day in Japanese.<sup>50</sup> Immersion courses at the high school level explore subjects in Japanese language and literature. Below are descriptions of three courses offered to high school immersion students during the 2009-2010 school year.

- ❖ **Japan Meets West:** This course studies Japan’s relationship with the western world through listening, speaking, reading and writing activities in the Japanese language. Students examine Japan’s encounters with the west between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries, and study recent examples of Japan-United States relations in the media. This course also explores cultural differences between Japan and the United States.<sup>51</sup>
- ❖ **Japanese Literature and Media:** Students in this course read, discuss and analyze Japanese texts from a variety of genres, including books, journals, magazines, letters, internet resources and everyday cultural materials like menus and street signs. Students learn to read analytically and to understand style differences between the written and spoken language. This course is designed to improve students’ abilities in reading, writing, speaking and listening modalities, as well as personal management and teamwork skills, technology use and global literacy.<sup>52</sup>
- ❖ **Japanese Pop Culture:** In this class, students explore Japanese popular culture through art, music, animation and technology. Students will develop critical thinking skills by considering the definition and impact of popular culture within society, and will reflect upon self-identity and cultural differences between Japanese and American life. This course allows students to gain cultural knowledge, expand vocabulary and learn behavioral adaptations to communicate effectively in Japanese.<sup>53</sup>

### *Staffing, Course Materials and Program Support*

At Mount Tabor Middle School, five teachers lead the Taborsan Japanese immersion instructional team, which includes approximately 140 students. These instructors

<sup>49</sup> Mount Tabor Middle School. 2009-2010. “Student and Family Handbook.” p.14.  
<https://mttabor.pps.k12.or.us/public/Student%20handbook%200910.pdf>

<sup>50</sup> Portland Public Schools. “School Facts: Grant.” <http://www.pps.k12.or.us/schools-c/profiles/?id=217#spprogram>

<sup>51</sup> Portland Public Schools. “Japan Meets West 2009-10 Syllabus.” <http://inside.pps.k12.or.us/depts-c/otl/syllabus/syllabus.php?id=3683>

<sup>52</sup> Portland Public Schools. “Japanese Lit and Media 2009-10 Syllabus.” <http://inside.pps.k12.or.us/depts-c/otl/syllabus/syllabus.php?id=2793>

<sup>53</sup> Portland Public Schools. “Japanese Pop Culture 2009-10 Syllabus.” <http://inside.pps.k12.or.us/depts-c/otl/syllabus/syllabus.php?id=3988>

teach Japanese language courses as well as other subjects, and serve as leaders of the immersion students, a group that has studied together since kindergarten at Richmond Elementary School.<sup>54</sup> During the 2009-2010 school year, two instructors taught immersion courses at Grant High School. These instructors also teach courses in the regular language curriculum for Japanese.<sup>55</sup>

Most materials used for the immersion courses at Grant High School are teacher-generated. In the Japan Meets West course, students use original Japanese language materials created by the instructor based on English textbooks, including *Japan Meets The West: A Case Study of Perceptions*, and *U.S.-Japan Relations: The View from Both Sides of the Pacific*.<sup>56</sup> Similarly, students in the Japanese Literature and Media and Japanese Pop Culture courses learn from teacher-created materials supplemented by primary source documents like books and magazines.<sup>57</sup>

The Japanese Magnet Program at Portland Public Schools receives support from the nonprofit parent organization Oya No Kai. This group provides financial support and advocacy for the immersion language program at all three schools. Specifically, Oya No Kai sponsors and organizes an intern teacher exchange program, which brings teaching aides from Japan to assist classroom teachers in the immersion program at all three Portland schools. The organization recruits interns and sponsors a year-long partnership with the Japanese Magnet Program, including arranging home stays with area families.<sup>58</sup> Oya No Kai also fundraises for the two cultural exchange opportunities available through the Japanese Magnet Program, which include trips to Japan after the 5<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades. During the spring of grade 8, a group of students participates in a two-week research residency in Japan, where they conduct independent research in the regions of Hiroshima, Hyogo, and Kyoto. The trip is fully sponsored by the fundraising efforts of Oya No Kai.<sup>59</sup>

### **Prince George's County Public Schools (MD)**

*Schools:* 216

*Type:* Local school district

*Students:* 129,752

*Locale:* Suburb, large

Prince George's County Public School District in Maryland operates a French language immersion program in two elementary schools, two middle schools, and one high school. Beginning in kindergarten of the K-8 program offered by Robert Goddard or John Hanson French Immersion Schools, students experience full immersion by learning most subjects in French through 6<sup>th</sup> grade. After 8<sup>th</sup> grade,

<sup>54</sup> "Student and Family Handbook," Op. cit., p. 14.

<sup>55</sup> Portland Public Schools. "2009-10 Course Syllabus." <http://inside.pps.k12.or.us/depts-c/otl/syllabus/?year=2009-10&school=912&search>

<sup>56</sup> "Japan Meets West 2009-10 Syllabus." Op. cit.

<sup>57</sup> "Japanese Lit and Media 2009-10 Syllabus." Op. cit.

<sup>58</sup> "Community – Interns." Op. cit.

<sup>59</sup> Oya No Kai. "Cultural Exchanges – 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Research Residency." <http://www.oyanokai.org/cultural/jmp8.html>

students may move on to the continuation of the immersion program at Central High School.<sup>60</sup>

### *Program Structure and Curriculum*

Students of the total immersion program at the French language schools in Prince George's County are expected to exit the 6<sup>th</sup> grade year bilingual and with a solid academic background in both English and French language arts. At the middle school level, students take two courses in French per semester which are taught back-to-back, including French language arts and culture, and world studies. Beginning in 7<sup>th</sup> grade, students study a third language; an exploratory course allows students to choose a language, which they begin studying in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade.<sup>61</sup> Students in middle school may also take courses in music, as well as an English curriculum in traditional classes like social studies, math and science. Focusing on language arts, world cultures and art, the middle school French immersion curriculum is supported by themes, seminar-style classes, field trips and other enrichment activities.<sup>62</sup>

In the high school program at Central High School, immersion students are required to take either two French language and culture courses, which allow them to begin a pre-International Baccalaureate program, or one of those courses combined with the continued study of the third language chosen in middle school. Students may also continue the International Baccalaureate through advanced language classes in the second language, which are also offered through Advanced Placement. Some limited opportunities for exchanges and travel in France are offered to all secondary school students, and more are being developed.<sup>63</sup>

### *Staffing and Course Materials*

Because of its organization within K-8 schools, staff and faculty of the French immersion program at the middle school level are often shared with the elementary level program. Robert Goddard French Immersion School, which enrolls 556 students, is staffed by 60 total employees including eight classroom teachers instructing only at the middle school level; John Hanson French Immersion School, with an enrollment of 337 students, has 42 employees including six classroom teachers at the middle school level. At both schools, the other staff members include a principal, assistant principal, immersion program coordinator, subject area specialists, professional counselors, special education teachers, parent liaisons, testing coordinators and other administrative positions.<sup>64</sup> At Robert Goddard French

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<sup>60</sup> Prince George's County Public Schools: World Languages. "French Immersion Program."

<http://www1.pgcps.org/worldlanguages/index.aspx?id=20614&linkidentifier=id&itemid=20614>

<sup>61</sup> Barr-Harrison, Pat. Op. cit.

<sup>62</sup> "French Immersion Program." Op. cit.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> John Hanson French Immersion School. "Our Staff."

<http://www1.pgcps.org/johnhansonfrenchimmersion/index.aspx?id=18472>

Immersion School, teachers are organized into five content teams in order to facilitate collaborative planning, including reading/language arts, French/language arts, math, science, and social studies.<sup>65</sup> All teachers of French-instructed courses are native or near-native speakers of the language, and hail from 17 countries and six continents.<sup>66</sup> At Central High School, the French immersion department staff includes a chair of the department and one teacher.<sup>67</sup>

### **Robbinsdale Public School District (MN)**

*Schools:* 25

*Type:* Local school district

*Students:* 13,187

*Locale:* Suburb, large

The Spanish immersion program at Robbinsdale Public School District was founded as a K-5 program at Robbinsdale Spanish Immersion School in 1987. Since then, it has been extended through the secondary level with programs at Plymouth Middle School, Robbinsdale Armstrong High School, and Robbinsdale Cooper High School, graduating its first class of the complete K-12 program in 2000.<sup>68</sup> Although pieces of the immersion curriculum have been reviewed in the past, the entire K-12 program is currently undergoing a comprehensive evaluation process for the first time to identify needs and inconsistencies among different program levels. Recommendations to improve the program, made at an early stage in the review process, include:

- ❖ Creating a new language arts curriculum
- ❖ Changing some enrollment policies for students entering in kindergarten
- ❖ Revisiting the goals and expectations for each grade level within the broader scope of a K-12 program
- ❖ Finding ways to foster authentic communication, including service learning
- ❖ Requesting staff and family input before decisions are made about changes to the immersion program<sup>69</sup>

### *Program Structure and Curriculum*

In the 6<sup>th</sup> grade, students wishing to continue the Spanish immersion program at Robbinsdale Public Schools enter Plymouth Middle School, where they take half their classes per day in Spanish through grade 8. Subject areas taught in Spanish include social studies, reading, and science; students take physical science in grade 6, life science in grade 7, and earth science in grade 8. In 8<sup>th</sup> grade, the language arts course is replaced by Advanced Spanish 8, an advanced course focusing on the language in context to prepare students for the high school program. Spanish courses at the

<sup>65</sup> Robert Goddard French Immersion School. "Staff."

<http://www1.pgcps.org/robertgoddardfrenchimmersion/index.aspx?id=18416>

<sup>66</sup> "Robert Goddard French Immersion." Op. cit.

<sup>67</sup> Central High School. "Faculty and Staff." <http://www1.pgcps.org/central/interior.aspx?id=46646>

<sup>68</sup> Johnson, C., Neumann, J., Peuschold, P. and Wild, P. April 2010. "Spanish Immersion Program Kindergarten Through Grade 12." Robbinsdale Public School District, p. 2.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid, pp. 27-31.

middle school level meet district standards for the social studies, language arts, and science content areas.<sup>70</sup>

After completing the immersion program at Plymouth, students have the option of continuing the curriculum at either Armstrong or Cooper High Schools. Immersion students at both schools take a minimum of one Spanish course per term, covering language and literature, throughout each year of high school. At Armstrong High School, immersion courses fall under the Advanced Placement program, qualifying students to take Advanced Placement tests in Spanish language and literature; at Cooper High School, students can earn credit towards an International Baccalaureate diploma through the immersion curriculum in the junior and senior years, and can also opt to take Advanced Placement courses.<sup>71</sup> Since the school district has no graduation requirement for world languages, immersion courses at the high school level count towards requirements as elective credit.<sup>72</sup>

### *Staffing and Course Materials*

Ten teachers instruct immersion courses in the secondary programs at Robbinsdale Public Schools, five each for middle and high school. At Plymouth middle school, two teachers work with immersion students full-time, while the others teach immersion students for roughly half of the day, and additionally lead courses in the traditional Spanish language program or other subjects. In both high school programs, immersion teachers are also shared with other subject areas, teaching immersion students for half of the day's classes or less.<sup>73</sup>

Although only two of the current teachers are native Spanish speakers, the positions require an exceptionally high level of proficiency with the language, especially for teachers instructing content area courses such as science or math, according to a representative of the district. A focus on literature in high school immersion courses also necessitates an instructor with advanced fluency in the Spanish language.

Course materials for the immersion program in Robbinsdale Public School District undergo a review process every eight years, along with a review of materials in each content area the program teaches. For example, a middle school Spanish immersion course in social studies would be reviewed with other middle school social studies courses. The current comprehensive review of the K-12 immersion program marks the first time course materials will be evaluated separately from content areas. Increasingly, bilingual versions of content area textbooks have been available, which simplifies the selection process for immersion materials. In some cases, however, the Spanish version of course materials, designed for native speakers of the language,

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<sup>70</sup> Neumann, John. Op. cit.

<sup>71</sup> Johnson, C. Op. cit. p.10.

<sup>72</sup> Neumann, John.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

may not be a perfect match for the literacy and vocabulary skills of immersion students. According to a representative of the district, this has presented a challenge for students and teachers that may be addressed through the current review.<sup>74</sup>

#### *Other Issues and Information*

Another issue faced by Robbinsdale Public School District is retention of students in the immersion program. Because of the program's overlap with International Baccalaureate at the high school level, some students choose to exit the immersion track during the middle school years to complete the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program, which is only offered at Robbinsdale Middle School. Sometimes, those students wish to rejoin the immersion program at the high school level. Although in most cases, students have been permitted to exit and rejoin the program, there is some inconsistency between Cooper and Armstrong High Schools as to what students must do to rejoin, such as taking a lower grade level course in order to ensure preparation.<sup>75</sup>

#### **Saint Louis Park Public School District (MN)**

*Schools:* 10

*Type:* Local school district

*Students:* 4,339

*Locale:* Suburb, large

The immersion program in the public school district of Saint Louis Park begins at Park Spanish Immersion School, a K-6 elementary program housed in a local community center. The program continues through 8<sup>th</sup> grade at Saint Louis Park Junior High School, and finishes with advanced language course options at Saint Louis Park Senior High School.<sup>76</sup>

#### *Program Structure and Curriculum*

Park Spanish Immersion School offers elementary school students a full immersion experience, instructing most of the primary curriculum in the target language. During both years of middle school at Saint Louis Park Junior High School, immersion students take two courses taught in Spanish, social studies and Spanish language arts. The curriculum of these courses mirrors that of the English versions of courses in these disciplines that are required at the middle school level. Students in the immersion program earn credit for one full year of world languages, while regular students complete a semester-long language curriculum.<sup>77</sup>

The goal of the immersion program at the high school level is to help bilingual students maintain their Spanish skills. At Saint Louis Park Senior High School,

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Saint Louis Park Public Schools. "District Profile." <http://www.rschoolday.com/se3bin/clientgenie.cgi>

<sup>77</sup> Maslowski, Corey. Saint Louis Park Public Schools. Telephone Interview. April 26, 2010.

immersion students can choose to take advanced courses in Spanish language or Hispanic literature. All Spanish courses appropriate for immersion students offer credit in the Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate programs, as well as credit in world languages or electives that allow students to meet the graduation requirements of the school. Although there is no minimum requirement, high school immersion students typically enroll in one advanced Spanish course per year.<sup>78</sup>

### *Staffing and Course Materials*

Two teachers instruct immersion courses at the middle school level, one each for social studies and language arts courses. In high school, three or four teachers lead courses appropriate for immersion students at Saint Louis Park Senior High. Instructors are recruited primarily through word of mouth, advertisements in the local newspaper, or partnerships with universities, according to an administrator of the K-12 immersion program. The program has had some difficulty recruiting qualified teachers, in part due to the prevalence of immersion programs in the region. Saint Louis Park Public Schools require immersion teachers to be bilingual in Spanish and English, demonstrate a firm grasp of the curriculum content, understand the methodology of language immersion education and teaching to non-native speakers of the target language, and have some experience teaching students in the U.S. The district does not do any overseas recruiting for immersion teachers, although it temporarily employs teaching assistants from other countries through an exchange program operated by the Amity Institute.<sup>79</sup>

At the elementary school level, administrators of the immersion program in Saint Louis Park are usually able to find Spanish versions of course materials through Minnesota's textbook adoption process, which often includes bilingual textbooks. After 6<sup>th</sup> grade, teachers at the junior and senior high frequently create their own original materials. The 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade immersion courses in social studies and language arts use materials based on the English versions of those classes. For example, the 7<sup>th</sup> grade social studies course focuses on history and current events of the Twin Cities regional area and the state of Minnesota; since Spanish-language textbooks on this specific material are not available, teachers have created their own. In high school, immersion courses in literature rely on easily accessible novels and other books by Hispanic authors, while other Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate courses may have specified materials through these programs.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

**Saint Paul Public Schools (MN)***Schools:* 125*Type:* Local school district*Students:* 40,107*Locale:* City, large

The Saint Paul Public School District operates a number of language immersion programs at the elementary school level, including growing dual immersion programs in Hmong, Spanish, and Mandarin. At the secondary level, the district oversees a one-way immersion program in French that has been articulated through middle school at Ramsey Junior High and a K-12 program serving immersion students at Highland Junior and Senior High Schools.<sup>81</sup>

*Program Structure and Curriculum*

Saint Paul Public Schools' K-12 Spanish immersion program begins at Adams Spanish Immersion Magnet School, where students in kindergarten through 6<sup>th</sup> grade experience a full immersion curriculum. By the 6<sup>th</sup> grade, Adams students are taking Spanish-taught courses in mathematics, science, and social studies, supplemented by one course in English.<sup>82</sup> In 7<sup>th</sup> grade, immersion students move on to the continuation of the program at Highland Junior High School, where Spanish-taught courses are offered in social studies, math, science, and language arts. To remain in the program, students must at least take the Spanish immersion version of core courses in language arts and social studies. These courses meet state requirements for social studies and language arts at each grade level by teaching a curriculum that is parallel to the English versions of the courses. In addition to the core courses, students have the option of taking immersion versions of classes in math and science, totaling a maximum of four Spanish courses per term.<sup>83</sup>

In high school, Spanish immersion courses are limited to elective offerings in the subject areas of social studies and language arts. Although the courses do not satisfy any core requirements in these disciplines, they count towards the state requirement for elective credit. Additionally, all immersion courses at the high school level are part of the International Baccalaureate program and can advance students towards an International Baccalaureate diploma. To remain in the immersion program, students must take at least one Spanish course per year. Immersion electives are offered on a four-year rotating schedule, and include topics such as current events, culture or literature. Listed below are some examples of Spanish immersion elective courses offered to students of Highland Senior High School, drawn from course descriptions on the school's website.

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<sup>81</sup> Bernal, Heidi. Op. cit.

<sup>82</sup> Saint Paul Public Schools. "Adams Spanish Immersion Magnet."  
[http://adams.spps.org/All\\_about\\_Adams\\_Spanish\\_Immersion\\_School.html](http://adams.spps.org/All_about_Adams_Spanish_Immersion_School.html)

<sup>83</sup> Bernal, Heidi. Op. cit.

- ❖ **Spanish Immersion Legends and Storytelling:** In this class, students use legends of the Spanish speaking world to compare different aspects of Spanish language culture, learn about the art of storytelling and oral history, learn interviewing techniques and improve their skill in reading, writing, speaking and listening comprehension. This class is offered for two quarters.
- ❖ **Literature of the Caribbean:** This course examines the work of Caribbean authors using the theme of identity. Studying the texts as a literary response to regional history, students read novels, essays, testimonial writing, poetry and theory by authors including Cirilo Villaverde, Jose Marti and Rosario Ferre. The course studies the Caribbean as an imaginary geography, focusing on slavery and African legacy and the ideas of home and exile. Film and music are used to supplement the literature in this one-quarter class.
- ❖ **Spanish Creative Writing:** Designed for Spanish speakers who want to improve their writing abilities, this course examines various aspects of prose such as plot, setting, point of view, character and dialog. Students complete class writing activities as well as a final project of prose or poetry in Spanish. This course is offered for a quarter.<sup>84</sup>

### *Staffing and Course Materials*

Teachers in the Spanish immersion program at Saint Paul Public Schools must demonstrate native-like abilities in the language if they are not native speakers. Currently, two out of the six immersion faculty teaching at the secondary school level are originally from Spanish-speaking countries overseas. Although the hiring process does not include a specific language test, applicants are required to present a sample lesson in Spanish, as well as complete a writing exercise. If the applicant is a native Spanish speaker, he or she will be required to complete the writing exercise in English in order to demonstrate proficiency, as teachers may also need to communicate with parents, students and colleagues in English. At the secondary school level, teachers must be licensed in the subject they are teaching; for example, instructors of immersion social studies courses must hold a state license to teach social studies.<sup>85</sup> The Saint Paul Public School district recruits most of its immersion teachers through word of mouth, although candidates are sometimes found through the district's participation in several local language immersion networks, including the Minnesota Advocates for Immersion Network (MAIN).<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Highland Park Senior High: International Baccalaureate World School. "Spanish Courses." [http://www.highlandsr.spps.org/Spanish\\_Courses](http://www.highlandsr.spps.org/Spanish_Courses)

<sup>85</sup> Bernal, Heidi. Op. cit.

<sup>86</sup> M.A.I.N. Parents: Minnesota Advocates for Immersion Network. "MAIN FAQ." [http://mainparents.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=13&Itemid=28](http://mainparents.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=13&Itemid=28)

Through an exchange program operated by a nonprofit organization called the Amity Institute, the immersion program in Saint Paul also employs teaching assistants from Spanish-speaking countries abroad. These teachers live with a host family affiliated with the school and receive a stipend for their assistance with the program. They are required to be fluent in English and hold an equivalent of a U.S. bachelor's degree as well as teaching certification from their home country.<sup>87</sup> Teaching assistants typically participate in the exchange for one school year.

Course materials for core immersion courses in middle school, which must meet state requirements for social studies and language arts, are carefully selected to be basically equivalent to those of the parallel English-taught courses. Spanish versions of textbooks are often available; the district frequently considers the availability of Spanish language renditions when choosing course materials. If Spanish editions of textbooks are not available, administrators will select materials that align in content with state standards. In some cases, the immersion program staff will develop original materials to meet this need.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Amity Institute. "Exchange Teacher Program Overview." <http://www.amity.org/et.html>

<sup>88</sup> Bernal, Heidi. Op. cit.

## **Project Evaluation Form**

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