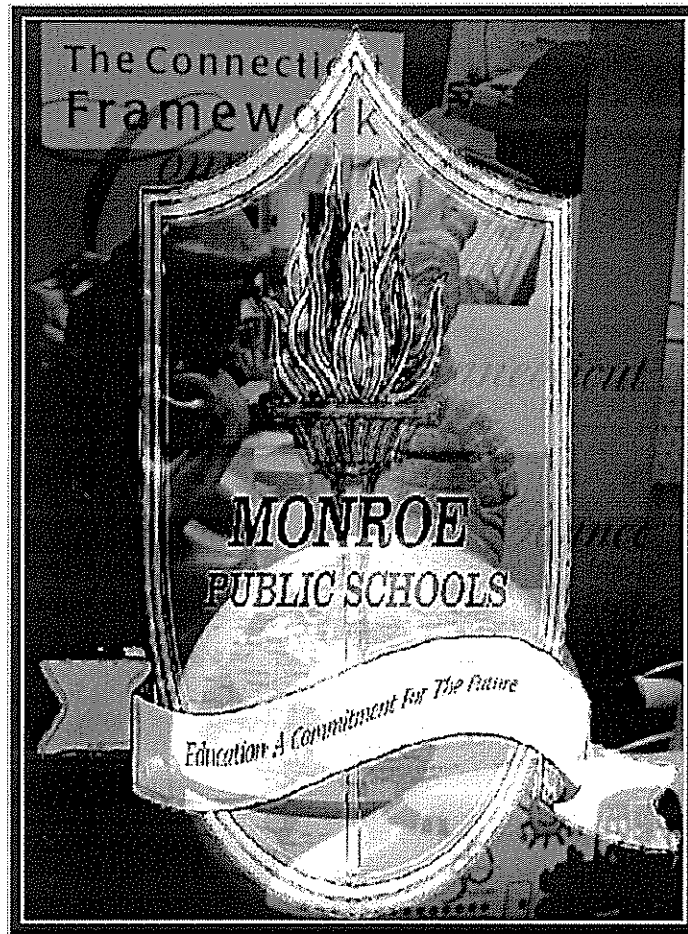


MONROE PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Monroe, Connecticut



PreK-12 World Languages Curriculum Audit
2006

MONROE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

WORLD LANGUAGES CURRICULUM AUDIT TEAM MEMBERS

November 1, 2006

AUDIT TEAM MEMBERS

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AUDIT PROCESS

The Monroe Curriculum Audit is a PrK-12 cyclical review of the curriculum within a program area. There are 3 program areas.

AREA I	AREA II	AREA III
English/Language Arts	Business	Computer Education
Mathematics	Health	Library Media
Science	Music	Technology Education
Social Studies	Physical Education	
World Languages	Visual Arts	

The audit process involves a team of experts that examine both quantitative and qualitative data about the impact of the curriculum on student achievement. The audit

also examines instruction and assessment practices used within the curriculum. This examination provides feedback in three areas (1) highly effective practices occurring within the district, (2) areas in need of improvement, and (3) what researchers refer to as “what the district doesn’t know it doesn’t know.”

A variety of activities occur before, during and after an audit to involve educators within the district. This includes an opportunity to construct various questions that can help to guide the audit. Additionally, the audit team is encouraged to ask whatever clarifying and/or probing questions they choose in order collect information about the program area. On the day of the audit the team gathers from various parts of the state and they interview individual administrators and teachers, and groups of parents and students. The audit team may visit classrooms to view teaching and learning, examine all available resource materials used in classes, and other related documents, such as school and/or community survey results.

The audit report is constructed through email exchanges between audit team members. This process continues until the report achieves consensus among the audit team members. As a courtesy to those people directly involved in the audited subject area, a preliminary report is reviewed with teachers involved in the program area, as well as the Superintendent of Schools, and the Board’s curriculum committee. The completed report is then presented to the Board of Education.

The report is structured using a three year, open-ended continuum. That is, the audit and the actionable data produced in the discovery phase results in a plan. Implementation of the plan begins immediately following the audit; generally, this involves recommendations that can be acted upon with minimal or no associated cost. For other elements of the plan, such as those requiring further research, planning or substantial funding, options do exist to phase in these elements over time. While changes may not occur at a pace that pleases everyone, the process assumes that valid recommendations, deemed to be in the best interest of students, will eventually be funded and achieved.

FINDINGS

Findings are reported as *assets* and *challenges*.

- Assets are items identified by the audit team as “supporting forces” that can help in the continuous development of an excellent world languages program for the community
- Challenges are those items identified by the audit team as “blocking forces” that need to be addressed, overcome or compromised in order to progress in the continuous development of an excellent world languages program for the community
- The excellent program that the district envisions is a program that aligns with the *Connecticut Common Core of Learning*, and the *Connecticut Frameworks: PreK-12 Curricular Goals and Standards*

In this report, assets and challenges are grouped as district-wide, elementary, middle or high school findings.

ASSETS

DISTRICT-WIDE

- Faculty pride in the world languages program
- Honesty and transparency of the audit process
- Learning Walk revealed that students appeared to enjoy their class experience
- Faculty members are enthused, work collaboratively and are good at what they do
- Teachers are aware of the curriculum frameworks and have mapped their courses
- Teachers have created and use authentic assessments
- Administrative support and belief in the importance of world languages in K-12 curriculum
- High level of satisfaction expressed by student and parent focus groups
- Focus groups of parents and students expressed understanding of the importance of world languages in the global economy, and students spontaneously articulated plans to use the world languages that they are learning.

ELEMENTARY

- Principals support the inclusion of world languages starting as early as possible
- Some parents do pay for some instruction in Spanish through the Arts and Imagination program, a before school program

MIDDLE SCHOOL

- Students experience exposure to French and Spanish speaking cultures starting in the grade 5 unified arts rotation
- The middle school grade 7 and 8 program offers instruction for students that qualify using a rubric that focuses on achievement in English/language arts.
- Students spoke highly of their grade 7/8 experience in world language

HIGH SCHOOL

- Leadership of the world languages department was described as even-handed with equitable support and resources available for each world language curriculum area
- The high school offers instruction in Spanish, French, German, and Latin.
- The community supported the introduction of Advanced Placement courses in Spanish, six years ago, and subsequently added AP courses in French and Latin at Masuk High School
- The community supported the construction of a World Languages lab as part of the recent Masuk renovation project.
- Students in the focus group spoke fondly of their world language experience. They described their likes and dislikes about instructional activities. They like an “interactive” approach, such as songs, rhymes and skits. They especially like it when teachers engage them in conversation, outside of the classroom, in the target language. Dislikes—repetitive tapes, “repeat after me” and worksheets.
- Students appreciate teacher efforts in arranging special world language events and activities held after school and evenings
- Students indicate that learning another language helps them understand their native English language, including grammar and sentence structure.
- Faculty members offer international field trips to students as may be approved by the Monroe Board of Education.

- Teachers generally expressed satisfaction with the textbooks and resource materials provided by the district.

CHALLENGES

DISTRICT-WIDE

- There is a general need to immerse the total community in an understanding of the value of world languages to national security, especially in securing a place in the more competitive global economy.
- Building the capacity of the nation's workforce to speak and understand multiple world languages is imperative. Research clearly suggests that the sooner instruction begins the better. The challenge for individual districts to respond to this need, especially in the face of limited local funding and the contractual boundaries established for the length of the instructional day may appear to be daunting, but it is a challenge that districts must address.

ELEMENTARY

- Elementary world language instruction is not offered within the district. While instruction has begun in many wealthier districts the gap between those having the advantage of early instruction in a world language, and those that do not, is an equity issue extending beyond the district. Similar to discussions around the issue of the "digital divide" those privileged to begin world language instruction at an early age can achieve proficiency or fluency in multiple languages, a real advantage for those students in a global society.
- Providing world language instruction, beyond the funding issues, must include a determination of which world language(s), how to schedule instructional time within the contractual boundaries of the school-day, and where or in what grade to begin instruction. Other districts are dealing with these questions, including districts with less ability to pay, and the district needs to use regional, state and federal resources to research and identify the best options for Monroe.

MIDDLE SCHOOL

- The initial exposure to the world languages program begins in grade 5. The 5/6 program provides an exposure to French and Spanish speaking cultures. This occurs as part of a 6-week unified arts rotation. The audit team, after hearing from student and parent focus groups, recommends that this program be

reconfigured to place more emphasis on language acquisition. That is, teaching the language within the context of the culture.

- Not all students have access to the world languages offerings in grades 7 and 8. With regards to the Jockey Hollow grade 7 and 8 world languages program, the audit team with its expertise in world languages and curriculum, consistently cited research that challenges the assumption that students not performing well in English/language arts benefit from more of the same, as opposed to giving them the opportunity to begin learning a second language. Responses from student and parent focus groups support this research-based contention. Students cited several examples of students that were denied the opportunity to take a world language in the middle school, that subsequently excelled in world language classes at Masuk. Students also stated that learning a second language has helped them improve their understanding of their native English language.
- If the current grade 7/8 program continues as it is currently configured, the assumptions that are central to the rubric used for determining which students have access to world languages, and which students are denied the opportunity, needs to be reviewed, and clearly communicated to both students and parents
- Students in the German program, including students planning on a career in engineering, indicated that they hope to use their ability to converse in German to enhance their engineering credentials in a global economy. These students indicated they would like to have had the opportunity to begin their German language studies in the middle school, similar to existing opportunities in Spanish and French.

HIGH SCHOOL

- Students in the focus groups indicated a desire to study other world languages including Italian, Mandarin Chinese, Russian and Arabic.
- Students and teachers expressed frustration over operational issues involving the world languages lab. Students also indicated that some instructional activities conducted in the lab could be completed in the regular classroom. The lab provides students with opportunities to listen and respond in the target language, individually or in a group. The teacher is able to monitor and make instructional adjustments based upon that monitoring. The lab is also used for assessment purposes. The laboratory is wired for Internet access, thus providing many possibilities for exchanges with classrooms from around the world. Students indicated a real desire to engage in these kinds of activities.

- Teachers do arrange for cultural experiences and student exchanges, the audit team recommends opportunities that involve home-stays, as opposed to hotels, for American students going abroad similar to the arrangements for foreign students hosted by American families in various communities.
- There is a need to continue and expand efforts, through local businesses and non-profits, to help students, parents and other community members see the increased employment opportunities and other advantages for students that learn multiple languages. This should include a world languages emphasis for current College and Career events.
- Professional development should include opportunities for increased dialogue and Learning Walk opportunities for teachers between the middle and high school levels to add to the understanding of the programs at each level.
- While feedback from Masuk graduates about the world languages program is very positive, high school educators and higher education practitioners need to continue to create opportunities for dialogue about transitional issues and including university expectations.
- Generally, all high schools need to continue to discuss the issue of “seat-time” verses credits, especially with the growing number of districts offering world language instruction beginning in kindergarten. This includes the discussion of goals and objectives, and the meaning of proficiency. Many school districts have developed assessments to account for learning within the world languages as it relates to goals of the district’s world language programs, and this is likely to be even more essential with the introduction of world languages in the early grades.
- Teachers would like to have more opportunities to participate in workshops and training offered by the American Council of Teachers of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) and to help them address the ACTFL standards.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations are contained in a matrix that is spread across an open-ended continuum on the following page. This structure provides professional development time for the district's certified health educators to research means of addressing the challenges cited in the audit report, and to plan and propose recommended solutions for inclusion in the budget/funding process.

Those items that can be addressed immediately following the audit, will be the focus of year one (discovery).

In year two (professional development), district world language educators will engage in professional development activities with a focus on research and planning for changes in curriculum, instruction and assessment activities to align with the World Languages component of the *Connecticut Frameworks: K-12 Curricular Goals and Standards*, adopted by the Connecticut State Board of Education. This includes adjustments to curriculum maps, and identifying resource materials to improve the world language program. Recommended adjustments in program needs and staffing levels need be submitted for inclusion in the proposed budget or on the *list of options for consideration* beyond the Monroe "turn-key" budget in the next available budget cycle.

Year three (implementation) marks the beginning of the implementation phase for changes requiring additional funds for instructional resource materials and changes in staffing levels.

PreK-12 WORLD LANGUAGES AUDIT

Recommendations are numbered for easy reference and do not reflect any suggested priority.

<p>YEAR 1 2006-2007</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare and conduct audit (November 1, 2006) • Prepare preliminary report for world language teachers, administrators, Superintendent of Schools and BOE Curriculum Committee • Prepare final report for BOE meeting--January 16, 2007 • Meet with world language teachers to review <i>assets</i> and <i>challenges</i> • Address <i>challenges</i> that involve simple low/no cost solutions. Typically these are procedural issues, communication issues, and modifications to instructional or assessment practices • Central Office to initiate and facilitate meeting between the Monroe Director of Technology and CTS Labs to resolve any and 	<p>YEAR 2 2007-2008</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • World language teachers' professional development to focus on research to address challenges and recommendations contained in the audit report • Research exemplary world language programs in other districts where instruction begins in early grades including which language(s), program structure, and funding sources • Research options for addressing the challenges and recommendations relating to the current grade 5-8 program, as it is currently offered on the middle school campus • Explore regional, state and federal sources and grants to increase world language offerings and earlier grade-level access to instruction 	<p>YEAR 3+ 2008 +</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase world language staffing at Jockey Hollow to provide all 7/8 students with equal access to the world languages program • Phase in elementary FTEs to begin integrated instruction in Spanish beginning in grade K and increase FTEs as the students and the program advances • Begin offering Mandarin Chinese through teacher exchange opportunities provided through state resources.

<p>all questions about the functionality of the world languages lab (completed 11/17/2006)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify opportunities for professional development through CTS Lab user groups involving other schools and districts in sharing best practices. Plan for year-2 professional development activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan activities, including college and career day activities that highlight the importance and increased opportunities available for learners who master multiple languages. Participate in professional development activities, including the world language laboratory user group that is composed of world language instructors from other districts to share best practices. Foster opportunities for dialogue with local universities regarding the high school to university transition for world language students. Explore options for students to experience international exchange opportunities, especially those involving home-stays, and to fully utilize the Internet capabilities of the World Language lab to connect with sister school and classroom opportunities around the world. 	
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Report prepared by: Dr. C. Richard Canfield
Assistant Superintendent

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