



Spanish Immersion at the High School Frequently Asked Questions

Working Document

Woodbury High School Principal Linda Plante and Cottage Grove Middle School Principal Elise Block are the administrators who will lead the efforts of the Spanish Immersion Pathway Planning Team. A number of issues are being discussed and many questions have come forward. This document is intended to serve as a working document as the issues are addressed. Updates will continue to be posted.

Questions can be directed to either Mrs. Plante or Mrs. Block. They can be reached at:

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DEVELOPING THE PROGRAM

Who will make up the team that will develop a plan for the full implementation of a high school program? When will this take place?

Administration, staff and parents will meet from July through November of this year to continue to fully develop the plan that will answer the questions listed here and to consider the wealth of practice and research that will help ensure a high-quality immersion program for South Washington County School's Spanish Immersion students.

What is the determining factor for the location of the high school program?

This will be an administrative decision. Like the IB program, it is more important to consider the quality and rigor of the program that serves the needs of the unique students appropriately. The district determination will be based on a number of factors including student enrollment factors both now and in the future.

When will the high school immersion program begin?

Because the current program will serve students in 7th grade next year, the district has just over a year to have the plan in place for the registration of these students who will be in ninth grade in the fall of 2013. Coursework needs to be in place and approved by the School Board in the spring of 2012.

Will there be summer program available for students (now and in the future)?

Cottage Grove Middle School will offer Wednesday Reading Counts tests and possible Literature Circles for interested Spanish Immersion students. This will be considered as an option for continuation at the high school level

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

Will a fluency assessment be administered as students' transition from one level to another?

Fluency assessments are incorporated throughout the program. Results are used for a variety of purposes, such as differentiated instruction or placement in classes. Results will not exclude students from being in the program.

Is anything noted on the diploma of a Spanish Immersion graduate?

We have learned of possible notations from the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE), which may be added to the diploma of a Spanish Immersion graduate. A proposal for a District 833 Spanish Immersion Graduate will be developed and submitted to MDE for consideration on high school diplomas for our students.

Will special education students be serviced in the same way in Spanish Immersion as they are in the rest of the student population?

Yes, however, in the current district model, services are delivered in English.

TRANSPORTATION

Will busing be available at no cost for the high school program?

The district currently offers choice programming at the high school with no district transportation. The budget will continue to be explored to determine whether this could become an option for all choice high school programs.

If this is not their attendance boundary area, will transportation be provided for the students to participate in athletics?

The school district does not provide transportation to practices for middle school athletic participants, who choose to do so at the high school level.

EXTRA-CURRICULARS

Will middle school students interested in high school athletics be able to participate at the school that houses the high school Immersion Program?

We are continuing to explore the question of athletic participation and eligibility. With high school athletics being available as early as 7th grade, we are in a position to readdress existing board policy regarding district participation and eligibility. A challenge will be to align district policy with the Minnesota State High School League policies, which have been modified recently.

CHOOSING NOT TO CONTINUE

Do students/parents need to “opt in” each year, or should those no longer interested “opt out”?

The current process requires the district to request parent notification when students advance to the next grade level (ie., elementary to middle). This will continue to be the case as students move from middle to high school. Students are automatically “rolled-over” to the next grade level unless notified by parents of a change in school.

If students make a decision to drop out of the Spanish Immersion pathway, will they return to their boundary school?

The student would return to their boundary school unless an intra-district transfer is submitted and approved.

Will students be eligible to remain in Cottage Grove Middle School or Woodbury High School after dropping the program?

Yes, through an approved intra-district transfer. Students accepted for the transfer could remain through 8th grade at Cottage Grove and then, if approved at the high school, could remain through graduation at Woodbury High School.

PROGRAM PARTICIPATION AND RETENTION

What will be the key for success of the program?

While there are a number of key components, the most important will be having a critical mass of the current number of students continuing through to the high school program. If at least two sections of students are not enrolled, the district will have difficulties with the financial consequences for a lesser number of students.

What will be the focus for the Pathway Planning Team?

A mission and value statements will be developed to support the focus of the team. Research will include partial Spanish Immersion program options, best practice suggestions, and model programs already in existence. Understanding what is working best for other programs will be key to the development of a working program for our students.

Attention to the required State GRAD tests for high school students, appropriate programming for special education students and other special considerations for the variety of options high school students experience will be considered throughout the discussions as well.