

November 8, 2017

Dear Morris Brandon Community:

Many of you may recall that last school year, in response to community feedback and request, we began a look into our World Language offerings at Morris Brandon. Last year, we communicated that we would continue this work into this school year. We are now at the point of resuming this work, and I would like to take a moment to bring the community up-to-speed on the context of this work and current conversation around it.

As you know, Morris Brandon Elementary is an International Baccalaureate school. As such, we are required to have a global context to our teaching and learning, and a part of this is offering World Language instruction beginning in 2nd grade. For over twenty years, the language offered at Brandon has been French. We have a solid French program that has been in place for a long time and has served thousands of students.

Despite this tradition of French, we often get the question from the community about offering Spanish as our World Language offering. In my tenure at Brandon, I have fielded many questions in regards to this topic. Partly in response to this community desire, in 2015-2016, we began an inquiry into Dual Language Immersion which resulted in launching a Spanish DLI program in Kindergarten as one way to bring another language into our school in the 2016-2017 school year. This school year, we have continued that program into 1st grade and will continue to grow the program each year to eventually have two classes per grade level learning through a DLI Spanish model. These students will have Spanish rather than French as their second language. Meanwhile, in our current model, all other students not in the DLI program will continue to take French as a second language beginning in 2nd grade.

Last school year, we conducted a community survey that was available to parents of Rising Kindergartners, and current Kindergarten and 1st graders. The survey asked them which language they would like their child to learn beginning in 2nd grade. The parents of DLI students were not included in the survey since the decision would not directly impact their children's language offering. The results of the survey indicated approximately a 60% to 40% split with the majority of respondents selecting Spanish as their choice. However, of the respondents who were parents of rising 2nd graders (those who would be immediately impacted if a language change was made for this school year), the results were a 50/50 split. As a result, we made no change to our language offerings this school year, and instead promised the community to dig deeper into this conversation this year and solicit more input with the goal being to make a final determination on the direction of World Language at Brandon by the end of calendar year 2017.

With that in mind, we invite you to our next GO Team meeting where we would like to hear from the community on this topic. I have charged the GO Team with helping me to solicit and interpret feedback

from the community on this topic so that I can make a final determination in the best interest of our school community. At the GO Team meeting on November 30 at 5:30 PM in the Main Campus Media Center, the GO Team will hear public comment regarding the future of World Language offerings at Brandon.

I do hope that you will join us to be part of this conversation and have your perspective shared and heard. Please see below for details on the format of GO Team meetings and next steps in the World Language discussion.

- November 30th at 5:30 in Media Center at Main Campus: GO Team meeting with Public Comment regarding World Language offerings. Please note the norms for Public Comment at GO Team meetings that are provided in the Bee Mail and on our website.
- The GO Team will meet on December 8th in a work session (not open to public) to process the feedback received at the 11/30 meeting. Next steps will be determined at that time and will be communicated via the Bee Mail. Our goal is to make a final decision on World Language offerings by the end of December. We will better be able to ascertain if this is reasonable after the meeting on 11/30.

Thank you in advance for engaging in this discussion with us. This is a true example of how the community can work together to provide input into school decisions. I look forward to hearing your input and encourage your participation and attendance on 11/30.