

SCHOOL DISTRICT OF SOUTH ORANGE AND MAPLEWOOD
525 Academy Street
Maplewood, New Jersey 07040

James G. Memoli

**Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum
and Instruction**

(973) 762-5600 x1823

fax (973) 378-9464

E-mail: jmemoli@somsd.k12.nj.us

TO: Peter P. Horoschak, Superintendent
Members of the Board of Education

FROM: Jim

RE: Response to the Board's Request Regarding Additional Information
on the Elimination of the Grades 4 and 5 Enrichment Program, the
Grades 1-5 Project Ahead Program in Non-Title I Schools, and the
Grades 3, 4, 5, Spanish Program.

DATE: February 5, 2007

Identification of Need

Maintaining the specials at the elementary level (art, library, vocal music, instrumental music, Project Ahead, Enrichment, physical education, and Spanish) is important both educationally and contractually. Educationally, all of these specials fulfill the State mandated *New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards* for their particular area. Although the State does not mandate how to schedule/deliver these specials (except for the 150 minutes per week of physical education/health/safety), the manner in which some of these specials are presently scheduled provides the contractual preparation time necessary for elementary classroom teachers.¹

As part of the budget process for the 2005-06 SY, efficiencies were realized in the delivery of elementary art, physical education and music. This resulted, for the first time, in several buildings sharing staff in these areas.

Presently, all of the instructional time allocated for art, vocal music, and physical education in grades K-5 and library in grades K-2, as well as 30 minutes of the 45-minute Spanish class in grades 3, 4, and 5 provide contractual preparation time for elementary classroom teachers. Project Ahead, Enrichment, and instrumental music are pullout programs and, therefore, do not provide preparation time for classroom teachers.

What follows is an update of last year's budget analyses (February 2006) of the elementary Spanish, Project Ahead, and Enrichment programs. Presently, the number of FTEs for Spanish in grades 3, 4, and 5 is determined by the number of sections in each elementary school that need to be served at those grade levels. The number of FTEs for Project Ahead in grades 1-5 and for Enrichment in grades 4 and 5 is determined by the number of students in each building that need to be served. The scheduling of these specials is impacted by the individual scheduling needs of each elementary school, the availability of district staff to serve the schools at specific times of day, and the need to provide lunch time, travel time, and preparation time for the specialists.

¹ Elementary school teachers will have a preparation period each time their entire class is covered by a special teacher, and special teachers will continue to be scheduled so as to permit elementary teachers to receive no less than three (3) such preparation periods weekly. Elementary teachers are to receive not less than one-hundred-sixty (160) minutes per week based upon a five (5) day workweek. Any non-teaching time beyond the one-hundred-sixty (160) minutes may be assigned by the principals for CST meetings, parent conferences, grade level meetings and administrative meetings.

Resources Provided by the District

For the 2006-2007 school year, there are 3 world language FTEs serving all students (1, 387) in grades 3, 4, and 5 in five elementary schools, 9.6 Project Ahead FTEs (some of whom are funded from State and federal aid) serving 469 students that represent 871 units of service in grades 1-5 in six elementary schools, and 3 Enrichment FTEs serving 331 students in grades 4 and 5 in five elementary schools.

ANALYSES

WORLD LANGUAGE (SPANISH)

Possible Net Savings from Alternative Delivery of World Language in Grades 3, 4, 5

- **Is elementary world language instruction required by State mandate?**

Presently, the *New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards for World Languages* express an unfunded mandate that a world language experience be offered to students in grades K-12. Recently, the State Board of Education adopted a high school graduation requirement for world languages of 5 credits (one year). Most college bound students, however, continue to take at least two/three years of a language in order to fulfill college admission requirements.

- **What is the scope of our present District elementary world language program?**

Three certified world language teachers teach Spanish in grades 3, 4, and 5 to all students (1,387) for 45 minutes once a week. When the elementary program was first implemented in our District, the weekly time allotted for instruction was 60 minutes (two 30 minute sessions) per week, and the ultimate goal was to expand the program to grades 1 and 2. Because of financial constraints over the last several years, this expansion has not taken place and the time allotted to instruction has been decreased from 60 minutes to 45 minutes in grades 3, 4, and 5. Spanish teachers are teaching between 24 and 25 45-minute classes per week.

- **Are there alternative ways to offer an elementary Spanish program?**

Yes, there are two alternatives:

- ✓ *Alternative #1: Implement a video-based program as the Spanish curriculum, which is presented by a classroom teacher who learns the language along with the students.*
In this model, the video-based program is used as a stand-alone curriculum, and the teacher, who doesn't speak Spanish, serves as a facilitator. Because they are learning the language together, the students typically progress in the language only as far as the teacher does. Teachers in this type of program report students' interactive language skills are very limited, but they gain some comprehensible input, which is necessary, especially at the beginning levels. Teachers also report that students show some understanding of syntax and basic grammar, reading ability, and vocabulary development in the target language and increased confidence and motivation to continue studying languages.
- ✓ *Alternative #2: Implement a video-based program as the Spanish curriculum which is presented by a classroom teacher who learns the language along with the students and have it reinforced on a weekly basis by a certified Spanish language teacher.*
This alternative differs from alternative #1 previously described only in that it provides important additional Spanish reinforcement from a certified Spanish teacher. For example, in the primary grades in the Toms River School System, a foreign language specialist regularly reinforces the videos that the classroom teachers have already shown or expands on the video lesson. Classroom teachers are present during the Spanish teacher's lesson and learn Spanish along with their students.

- **What does the research say about the advantages and disadvantages of video-based Spanish programs?**

{Resources: *Curriculum/Technology Quarterly*, fall 2003, volume 13, number 1 *Elementary Schools Turn to Video-Based Foreign Language Instruction* by Nancy Rhodes and Ingrid Pufahl
Center for Applied Linguistics Digest, December 2003, *Teaching Foreign Languages to Children Through Video* by Nancy Rhodes and Ingrid Pufahl}

While educators agree that having a fluent speaker as the teacher is the best way to teach a foreign language to children in a classroom setting, a video-based program could still be used. However, the disadvantages of such programs seem to outweigh the advantages:

Advantages

Video-based programs:

- ✓ Are a familiar medium that appeal to children
- ✓ Can be used effectively as a motivational tool
- ✓ Appeal to different learning styles
- ✓ Develop listening comprehension skills by exposing children to native speakers with a variety of accents
- ✓ Use visual imagery, which may enhance student learning
- ✓ Provide access to aspects of the culture not usually available to teachers

Disadvantages

Video-based programs:

- ✓ Do not foster interaction among students and between students and the teacher, an important component of foreign language instruction
- ✓ Do not produce the desired results to generate proficient speaking skills which open-ended questions produce
- ✓ May be boring and cause passive learning
- ✓ Lack the ability to provide feedback and reinforcement if the teacher does not speak the language
- ✓ Do not allow teacher control over content and vocabulary
- ✓ May give a false sense of how much language students are learning
- ✓ Do not comprehensively address the *New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards for World Languages*
- ✓ Do not articulate with long-sequence programs (middle and high school)
- ✓ Cannot assess student performance or reinforce correct pronunciation, semantics, and syntax
- ✓ Require elementary classroom teachers to be responsible for preparing to teach an additional subject area and receive training to teach it

- **What other issues must be considered in implementing a video-based Spanish program in our District?**

- ✓ Since our present third and fourth grade students have had instruction provided by a certified Spanish teacher, would we continue with our present model in grades 4 and 5 next year and introduce a video program in grade 1, or grade 2, or grades 1 and 2?
- ✓ Presently, 30 minutes of Spanish instruction is used to help to meet the contractual prep time for regular classroom teachers in grades 3, 4, and 5. Without the Spanish program there would be a considerable cost to paying for loss of prep time.
- ✓ Presently we know of no other school district in Essex County using a video-based foreign language program at the elementary level as the sole means of instruction in grades 2-5. What follows is a description of the elementary world language programs in neighboring districts:
 - ❑ Livingston offers Spanish language instruction in grades K-5 for 40 minutes per week. Five full time and one part time certified Spanish teachers teach all classes. In K-2 the Spanish teacher uses a video series to supplement the instruction. No video programs are used in grades 3-5.
 - ❑ West Orange offers Spanish language instruction in grades K-5 for 30-40 minutes per week. In grades K and 1 the regular classroom teacher provides instruction with the use

of a video program and the support of the certified Spanish teacher assigned to the building. In grades 2-5 certified Spanish teachers teach all classes for two sessions per week for a total of 75 minutes.

- ❑ Montclair offers Spanish and French language instruction in grades K-5. The program varies by elementary school. Ten certified world language teachers teach all classes and no video programs are used.
- ❑ Summit offers Spanish language instruction in grades 1-5. Certified Spanish teachers teach all classes and no video programs are used.
- ❑ Millburn offers Spanish language instruction in grades 2-5: 60 minutes per week (three 20 minute sessions) in grades 2 and 3 and 90 minutes per week (three 30 minutes sessions) in grades 4 and 5. Certified Spanish teachers teach all classes and no video programs are used. A video program originally used in grades 1 and 2 has been eliminated because it was not found to be valuable in advancing the communicative skills of students. There are five certified world language teachers, one assigned to each elementary school.

It is important to note that the published video programs presently on the market are geared toward primary age children and are intended to be implemented in kindergarten or in grade 1. Therefore, if a video program were to be implemented in our District it would be best to implement it beginning in grade 1.

- **How much does it cost to implement our present elementary Spanish program and how much would a video-based Spanish program cost?**

Using the average teacher salary including benefits (\$84,000) as a cost basis, our present program costs approximately \$252,000 plus \$2,500 in materials. The video-based Spanish programs that would be considered for implementation in our District would cost approximately \$1,500 for initial implementation in each grade 1 and grade 2 classroom in each school. It would be advisable to have copies of the program for each teacher so that teachers could have the flexibility of offering this instruction at the most appropriate time in their instructional week. There would also be a cost associated with teacher training. After the initial start up cost, in subsequent years there would be a cost for consumable materials for each grade level in each school of approximately \$500 per grade level.

Total cost for initial implementation in grades 1 and 2 is \$66,000.

• Clinton	8 video sets	\$12,000
• Marshall	11 video sets	\$16,500
• Seth Boyden	8 video sets	\$12,000
• So. Mountain	9 video sets	\$13,500
• Tuscan	8 video sets	\$12,000

The \$66,000 initial cost could be reduced if teachers were asked to share video sets, and/or if the program were phased in the first year in grade 1 and the second year in grade 2. However, once again we need to consider if our present program will be phased out by grade level or completely eliminated.

What would be the impact if the decision were made to eliminate the three elementary World Language teachers?

- A video program could be implemented in grades 1 and 2 and there would be no program in grades 3-5;
- An opportunity would be lost to offer Spanish instruction at a time when children can most easily and naturally acquire a second language and appreciate cultural differences;
- Our school district would be at risk in becoming less attractive than other districts since we know of no other neighboring district not offering elementary world language instruction;
- Our school district may run the risk of begin reprimanded by the State for not complying with the *Core Curriculum Content Standards* which express a mandate to offer world language at the K-5 level; and
- If the three world language positions were to be reinstated at a later date, it might be difficult to find suitable replacements given the status of today's job market.

CONCLUDING SUMMARY

Based on the impact the elimination of the elementary Spanish program would have on the District, it is not recommended that any cuts be made to this program. However, if the financial situation results in considering cuts to this program, it is the professional opinion of the K-5 Supervisor of Curriculum and Instruction as well as my professional opinion as a former World Language Educator and Supervisor and in my present position of Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction overseeing the World Language/ESL Program in the absence of a supervisor, that a video program would only offer marginal benefits to students educationally. These programs are only suitable for grades 1 and 2, would not accelerate our program in any way, and may be detrimental to students in their pronunciation and understanding of Spanish in the absence of a certified world language teacher. It would be more advisable to have no program at all rather than introduce a video program and require the general education primary classroom teachers to prepare more and add more to their instructional day.

PROJECT AHEAD

Possible Net Savings from Alternative Delivery of Project Ahead in grades 1-5

- **Is elementary Project Ahead required by State mandate?**

Title 18A:35-4.9, Promotion and remediation policies and procedures, states that districts must adopt policies and procedures for remediation and notify parents where appropriate. Additionally, *Title 6A:8-4.3, Accountability*, states that district boards of education shall provide appropriate instruction to improve skills and knowledge for students performing below the established levels of student proficiency in any content area either on the Statewide or local assessments.

- **What is the scope of our present District elementary Project Ahead program?**

9.6 FTEs are presently devoted to Project Ahead instruction in grades 1-5 in our elementary schools and are assigned as follows:

School	FTE Allocation
Clinton	2.0
Jefferson	1.0
Marshall	.7
South Mountain	.9
Seth Boyden	3.3
Tuscan	1.7
Total	9.6 FTE

9.6 Project Ahead FTEs (some of whom are funded from State and federal aid) are serving 469 (unduplicated count) students that represent 871 (duplicated count) units of service in grades 1-5 in six elementary schools. Students who meet the criteria for Project Ahead are provided approximately 90 minutes per week of instruction in language arts and 60 minutes per week of instruction in mathematics.

- **Are there alternative ways to offer an elementary Project Ahead program?**

Yes, there are three alternatives:

- ✓ *Alternative #1: Replace the pullout program with a push-in program.*

The push-in model is more costly than the present pullout model because it requires additional staff to push-in to all classes where Project Ahead students are assigned rather than have students pulled out to one central location from various classrooms.

- ✓ *Alternative #2: Replace the pullout program with an extended day program.*

The extended day model, although less costly, creates the need for an inordinate number of staff, and presents some serious scheduling and transportation implications. This model could also result in costing a great deal more in Title I schools, since the Title I mandate only allows substituting an after school program for a program offered during the school day when the majority of students are willing to take advantage of it.

- ✓ *Alternative #3: Offer Project Ahead solely in the two Title I elementary schools (Clinton and Seth Boyden).*

This alternative would save \$361, 200 by eliminating 4.3 Project Ahead FTEs at non-Title I schools (Jefferson, Marshall, South Mountain, and Tuscan). However, students with remedial needs in the non-Title I schools would need to be served by the general education classroom teacher.

- **How much does it cost to implement our present elementary Project Ahead Program and how much does our present Title I, DEPA and State aid funding cover?**

The cost of 9.6 FTEs for elementary Project Ahead using the average teacher salary including benefits (\$84,000) as a cost basis is \$806,400.

	Total Federal/State Funds Received by the District for Remedial Services	Amount from the Total of Federal/State Funds Used for Elementary Project Ahead
NJ Instructional Supplemental Aid	\$295,059	\$206,780 (various elem. schools)
Demonstrably Effective Program Aid (DEPA)	157,968	157,968 (at Seth Boyden)
Title I monies	160,565	52,859 (at Clinton & Seth Boyden)
TOTAL	\$613,592	\$417,607

Of the total cost for Elementary Project Ahead of \$806,400, 52% (\$417,607) is covered through state and federal funds and 48% (\$388,793) from the local operating budget. Of the total 9.6 FTEs for elementary Project Ahead, 5.0 FTEs are funded from this aid and 4.6 FTEs from local tax dollars.

- **What would be the impact if a decision were made to eliminate Project Ahead teachers from non-Title I schools?**
 - ✓ The general education classroom teacher would be responsible for meeting the needs of these students. How successful this can be accomplished will depend on class size and the success of the teacher in differentiating instruction.
 - ✓ Our non-Title I schools would be at greater risk of not meeting the AYP requirement of NCLB.

CONCLUDING SUMMARY

After a careful examination of the financial implications, it does not seem feasible to recommend any alternative delivery models for elementary Project Ahead at this time that would realize savings for the District. The push-in model is more costly than our present model because it requires additional staff. The extended day model is not a feasible option because of the difficulty in finding enough teachers willing to provide after school instruction, the transportation issues, and the scheduling conflicts with other after school activities. Additionally, the Title I mandate does not permit substituting an after school program for a program offered during the regular school day unless the majority of students will take advantage of it. The alternative of eliminating Project Ahead teachers in non-title I schools and garnering a savings of \$361,200 would require that teachers meet the needs of these students successfully in their general education class. Once again, this success will depend on class size and the success of the teacher in differentiating instruction.

ENRICHMENT

Possible Net Savings from Alternative Delivery of Enrichment in grades 4 and 5

- **Is an elementary Enrichment program required by State mandate?**
Title 6A:8-3.1 Curriculum and Instruction states that district boards of education shall be responsible for identifying gifted and talented students and shall provide them with appropriate instruction adaptations and services.
- **What is the scope of our present District elementary Enrichment program?**
 - ✓ Three certified teachers are presently devoted to Enrichment instruction in grades 4 and 5 in five of our elementary schools.
 - ✓ There are 331 students enrolled in the Enrichment Program in grades 4 and 5.
- **Are there alternative ways to offer an elementary Enrichment program?**
 - ✓ *Alternative #1: Replace the pullout program with a push in program.*
As is the case with Project Ahead, the push-in model is more costly than the present pullout model because it requires additional staff to push-in to all classes where Enrichment students are assigned rather than have students pulled out to one central location from various classrooms.
 - ✓ *Alternative #2: Replace the pullout program with an extended day program.*
The extended day model carries with it issues such as transportation, finding teachers willing to provide after school instruction, and competition with other after school activities.
- **How much does it cost to implement our present elementary Enrichment program?**
The cost of 3 FTEs for elementary Enrichment using the average teacher salary including benefits (\$84,000) as a cost basis is \$252,000.
- **What would be the impact if a decision were made to eliminate the Enrichment program in its entirety?**
 - ✓ The general education classroom teacher would be responsible for meeting the needs of these students in order to meet state regulations. How successful this can be accomplished will depend on class size and the success of the teacher in differentiating instruction.
 - ✓ Our school district would be at risk in becoming less attractive than other districts.

CONCLUDING SUMMARY

After a careful examination of the financial implications of the alternative models, at this time it does not seem feasible to recommend any alternative delivery model for Enrichment that would realize savings for the District. The push-in model is more costly than our present model because it requires additional staff. The feasibility of implementing the extended day model is very limited because this model carries with it issues of transportation, finding teachers willing to provide after school instruction, and competition with other after school activities. The alternative of eliminating Enrichment and garnering a savings of \$252,000 would require that teachers meet the needs of these students successfully in their general education class. Once again, this success will depend on class size and the success of the teacher in differentiating instruction.