Margaret "Peg" Phillips
29 Phillips Road
Newton, NJ 07860

April 22, 2019

Newton Board of Education
57 Trinity Street
Newton, NJ 07860

Re: Newton High School World Language Program

Dear Members of the Newton Board of Education:

As I am unable to attend the BOE meeting of April 23rd due to a family vacation, I instead am writing this letter to express my disappointment and concern regarding the proposed elimination of the German language program at NHS. I recognize that part of my disappointment is biased since this this decision personally affects my daughter, a present German II student. However my deeper concern is how the elimination of the German program will leave NHS with only two world language options moving forward.

When I researched world language program offerings of surrounding area public high schools, the vast majority of the schools are offering three language options and there are even two local schools that are offering four options. Private school offerings in the area go as high as five or six different language options.

While I understand the six year classroom enrollment statistics for the Spanish, German and French classes that lead the administration to target the elimination of the German program, the elimination of a third language option as a whole, should be viewed as a disservice to the students. If there is a belief that offering the German language is no longer financially prudent, then the administration should be looking to replace the program with an alternate world language option and not simply do away with a third language option altogether. In my opinion a goal of the administration should be to maintain the level of academic choice opportunities to the students, not to reduce them.

Last month, my family recently hosted one of the French exchange students visiting NHS. Our guest student was a lovely 14 year-old young lady that would be equivalent to a freshman in our school. In her schooling career, she has received word language instruction in Spanish, English and Japanese. While my children and I conversed with her in English, she and my husband instead conversed in Spanish. The advantages this young lady will have in her future due to her fluency in multiple languages is remarkable. Yet, here in Newton we are looking at reducing world language opportunities to our students.

I am truly concerned that if the NHS world language offering is reduced to two options, the school will never find the budget to reintroduce a third language again. I am basing this opinion on the fact that NHS never replaced the Latin program previously offered to the students. So NHS has gone from offering four options to three and now is proposing two.

I respectfully request the administration and BOE to please find a way to keep a third world language option available to the students of NHS, albeit German, Italian, Mandarin, etc.

Should the BOE continue to move forward with the German program elimination, I do wish to express my appreciation to the administration for offering, at the very least, the Educere program for those currently enrolled in German to continue their studies. We are a bit skeptical as to how it will all work and honestly don't believe that the online course will provide the same meaningful learning experience that a class with a teacher physically present in the classroom provides. However, my daughter would like to complete a third year of German language studies.

Sincerely,

Peg Phillips

CC: Dr. Greene
Mr. Waldron
Green Twp. BOE