World Languages Review

School Board Update
June 16, 2025
Presented by:
Cari Jo Drewitz, Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment
Miles Lawson, Secondary Curriculum Coordinator

Background

School District 197 is in the second year of reviewing its MS/HS World Language curriculum. Prior to this current review process, the team's most recent fully completed curriculum review was conducted in the 2013-2015.

Building upon the self-evaluation conducted in Year 1 (2023-2024), Year 2 (2024-2025) focused on aspects of **program design,** including;

- ACTFL standards, appropriate placement, monitoring student progress
- Optimizing language pathways and curricular coherence
- Instructional practices
- Developing instructional materials criteria
- Reviewing a wide variety of instructional materials
- and making recommendations on which resources to use in the language pathways.

The team met five times across the school year, mostly during district professional development days (to reduce the amount of classroom instructional time impacted).



Year 0 - Prereview
Standards Input

Year 1 - Self Study
Examine current program

Year 2 - Program Design
Course, Materials review

Year 3 - Implementation
Curriculum installation

Year 4 - Measuring
Assess installation, effect

Year 5 - Revising
Annual adjustments

Year 1 Department-Identified Next Steps

In addition to the typical work conducted in year 2 of curriculum review, the world language department focused on several key areas:

- Refine assessment practices by reviewing ACTFL standards, explore alternative assessment options, and continue to expand the Multilingual Seals program
- Improve student placement through careful analysis of factors influencing language level
- Optimize language pathways by monitoring legislative changes, ensuring curriculum alignment, and smoothing transitions between courses
- Expand program offerings to include a Native language course (pending grant approval) and revisiting the Spanish for Native Speakers pathway
- Enhance instruction through technology integration and focus on authentic language
- **DELAYED:** Addressing resource needs and the rising costs of immersive experiences.



ACTFL Standards, Appropriate Placement, Monitoring Student Progress

ACTFL Standards, Appropriate Placement, Monitoring Student Progress

ACTFL Standards

The ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) standards are a framework that;

- describes what language learners should know and be able to do,
- are organized around five goal areas
- and are aligned to various proficiency levels





Summary: The world language department is committed to aligning its curriculum with the ACTFL standards. Current resources being reviewed align with these standards, and the department will ensure full curricular cohesion once a new program is selected.

Placement and Monitoring Student Progress

- Assessing proficiency in world language courses is difficult because language ability is multifaceted, encompassing various skills and cultural understanding, making it challenging to objectively measure.
- Additionally, assessment is complicated by the subjectivity of performance-based tasks and the non-linear, individual nature of language acquisition. There are three specific instances where appropriate student placement based on proficiency is more critical than others.
  - Identifying appropriate placement for our native Spanish speakers
  - Students choosing Spanish IV concurrent enrollment or the high-school credit bearing Spanish IV
  - Participation in Multilingual Seals, and where their skills are in relation to ACTFL levels.

Summary: As one potential solution, the department is exploring the use of ACTFL-aligned assessments, such as the AAPPL test, in their assessment approach and how the test can be used to assist in difficult placement scenarios for students. Different scenarios for AAPPL implementation are being considered by the team and they will have a future recommendation as they work through those implementation options.



Optimizing Language Pathways and Curricular Coherence

Optimizing Language Pathways and Curricular Coherence

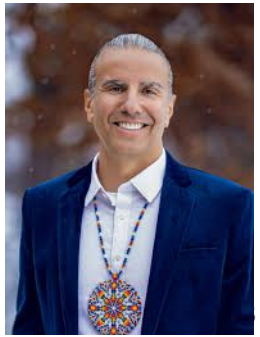
Native Language Course Update

AIS 112 Elementary Ojibwe I and 113 Elementary Ojibwe II, both 4-credits, online PSEO course through Mankato State. This program has decades worth of experience running the courses.

- Course Schedule: M/Tu/Th/F, 10:00-10:50 AM.
- A TRHS staff member will actively participate.
- Efforts are underway to modify PSEO requirements

A key highlight of this course is the instruction provided by Dr. Anton Treuer, a renowned leader in native language and community work from Bemidji State University. His expertise will significantly enrich the learning experience. Furthermore, the program plans to include field trips and provide resources for both students and the supporting instructor, enhancing both academic and cultural development.

AIS 112 Elementary OJibwe I (4 cr)
Introduces basic Ojibwe listening, speaking, reading, writing, and cultural/historical aspects.
AIS 113 Elementary OJibwe II (4 cr)
Continues to expand Ojibwe skills in listening, speaking, reading, writing, and cultural/historical aspects.



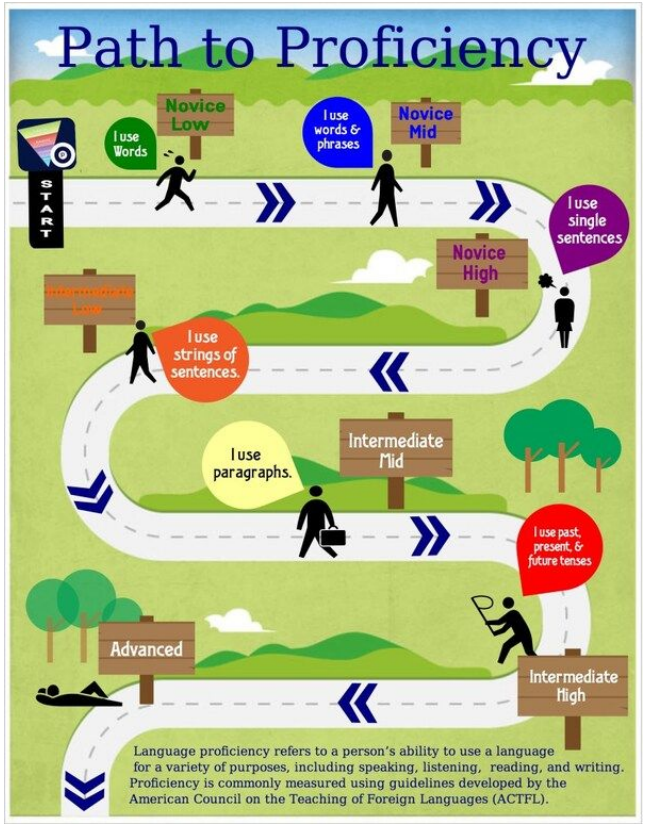
Optimizing Language Pathways and Curricular Coherence

Smooth Transitions Between Course Levels

The Spanish department is developing a plan to improve transitions across its course pathway, focusing on;

- seamless progression from MS Spanish I to HS Spanish II,
- even distribution of language skills across Spanish I-III
- re-establishing alignment with college-credit Spanish courses (starting with CE Spanish IV) and,
- determining optimal starting points for native Spanish speakers.

Summary: This diligent resource selection process that is underway in the department is key to achieving clear alignment and smooth transitions.



Optimizing Language Pathways and Curricular Coherence

Spanish for Native Speakers pathway

Effectively implementing Spanish for Native Speakers courses face several key challenges:

- **Diverse Student Goals:** Students have varied aims—from rapidly gaining college credit to strengthening family and heritage connections—making it difficult to design a single course that meets all outcomes.
- **Complex Student Needs:** Accurately assessing diverse existing skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking) is hard, especially with a mix of U.S.-born and internationally-born students, each with distinct linguistic and cultural backgrounds.
- **Cultural & Dialectal Differences:** The course must navigate wide-ranging cultural nuances and significant dialectal variations across Spanish-speaking communities.
- **Specialized Instructor Expertise:** Success requires educators skilled in both world language acquisition pedagogy and fundamental literacy instruction.

Summary: The team has not made much progress in this area yet, however, there are plans to engage with students, families, our English Learner staff members, and our Spanish cultural liaison in 25-26's plans.



Instructional Practices and Integration of Technology

Instructional Practices and Integration of Technology

Book character chatbots ready to talk

A role-play dialogue contains key information from the chapter. Main characters recreate scenes, and students have the chance to engage with the dialogue in a variety of ways, solidifying their ability to work with the key ideas.





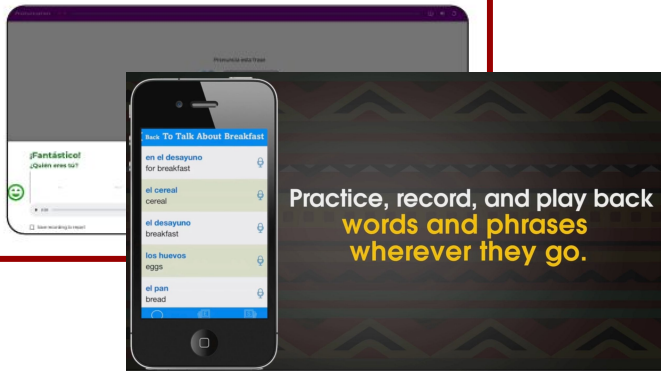


Enhanced language listening, speaking and pronunciation practice

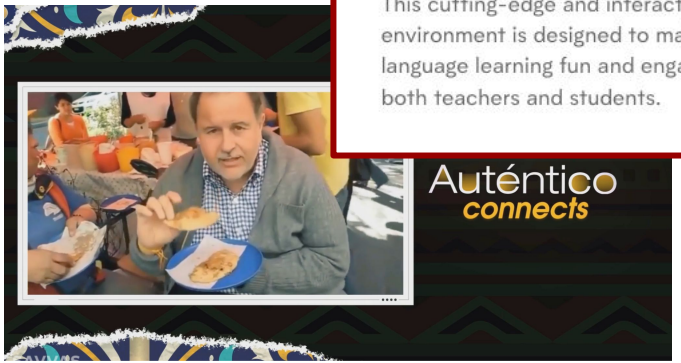
Students practice key words and phrases related to each chapter, getting immediate feedback on listening skills, speaking skills and pronunciation.

One-on-one support

Our Nuala chatbots are keen to chat with students. Some Nualas have built-in lessons, while others are an open canvas, ready for you to create your own lessons and conversations. And the individualized support and instant feedback from Nualas ensure students' skills develop, even with limited teacher time.









Nualang™ Technology Integrated

Discover our all-new Learning Site, fully integrated with Nualang capabilities. This cutting-edge and interactive environment is designed to make language learning fun and engaging for both teachers and students.

Instructional Materials Review

Phase I: Instructional Materials Rubric

The World Language Instructional Materials rubric provides a framework for evaluating curriculum based on four key categories;

- Content and Alignment
- Pedagogical Approach
- Technology Integration
- Assessment and Practice

These four categories are aligned to many of the department's self-identified needs, such as alignment with ACTFL standards, comprehensive assessments to help with monitoring progress and proficiency, and smooth transitions in skills from level to level through resource curricular cohesion.

Category/Role 1: Content and Alignment						
Descriptor	Example	Observed Y-Yes S-Somewhat N-No Ex- Extensive				Notes
ACTFL-Based: Adherence to ACTFL standards for language learning.		EX	Y	S	N	
Cultural Content: Integration of authentic cultural content relevant to the curriculum.		EX	Y	S	N	
Vertical Alignment: Coherent progression of skills and knowledge across grade levels.		EX	Y	S	N	
Interest Level: Engaging activities and materials that motivate students.		EX	Y	S	N	
Red Flag:						
• **Overemphasis on Grammar:** Excessive focus on grammar structures may hinder communicative competence. • **Limited Cultural Representation:** Lack of diversity in countries and cultures represented. • **Pacing Issues:** Too many chapters or an accelerated pace that may overwhelm students. • **Dated Content:** Outdated topics, vocabulary, and expressions that may not resonate with students. • **Vertical Alignment Problems:** Inconsistent progression of skills and knowledge across grade levels						

Instructional Materials Review

Phase II: Initial Digital Review

Upon completion of the rubric, the team moved into their self-exploration of resources they were able to locate digitally. While several resources were reviewed, the ones listed below garnered the departments most attention.

- Cengage (would be removed from list)
- McGraw Hill
- Houghton Mifflin (would be removed from list)
- Lingro Learning
- MacMillan (would be removed from list)
- Savvas
- Vista Higher Learning
- Voces
- Wayside Publishing

The team worked to narrow that list to 4-6 to more thoroughly review.

Category/Role 1: Content and Alignment						
Descriptor	Example	Observed Y-Yes S-Somewhat N-No Ex- Extensive				Notes
ACTFL-Based: Adherence to ACTFL standards for language learning.		EX	Y	S	N	
Cultural Content: Integration of authentic cultural content relevant to the curriculum.		EX	Y	S	N	
Vertical Alignment: Coherent progression of skills and knowledge across grade levels.		EX	Y	S	N	
Interest Level: Engaging activities and materials that motivate students.		EX	Y	S	N	
Red Flag:						

- **Overemphasis on Grammar:** Excessive focus on grammar structures may hinder communicative competence.
- **Limited Cultural Representation:** Lack of diversity in countries and cultures represented.
- **Pacing Issues:** Too many chapters or an accelerated pace that may overwhelm students.
- **Dated Content:** Outdated topics, vocabulary, and expressions that may not resonate with students.
- **Vertical Alignment Problems:** Inconsistent progression of skills and knowledge across grade levels

Instructional Materials Review

Phase III: Comprehensive Review 1

For the first of their four more comprehensive review days, the department requested to explore these vendor's programs more thoroughly.

- Lingro Learning (would be removed from list)
- McGraw Hill
- Savvas
- Vista Higher Learning
- Voces
- Wayside Publishing

The team spent the entire day talking with vendors, reviewing print resources, and exploring digital tools.

The team worked to narrow that list as best as possible.

Timeline	
8:30 - 8:45	Welcoming and Setting the Stage
8:45 - 9:35	Rotation 1 (break for 10 minutes) McGraw Hill - **SPANISH ONLY - French/German review provided resources further**
9:45 - 10:30	Rotation 2 (break for 10 minutes) VHL (Vista Higher Learning)
10:40 - 11:25	Rotation 3 (head to lunch after) - Voces **VIRTUAL ONLY**
11: 30 - 12:15	Lunch
12:15 - 1:00	Rotation 4 (with 10 minute break) - Wayside
1:00 - 1:55	Rotation 5 (w/10 minute break) - Savvas
2:05 - 2:50	Rotation 6 (Tentatively) - Somos **ON YOUR OWN INVESTIGATION IF WANTED**
2:50 - 3:15	Meeting wrap up and decision making and Consolidation and Closing

Instructional Materials Review

Phase III: Comprehensive Review 2

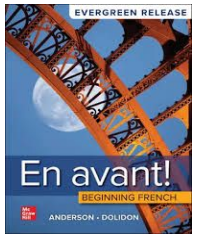
For the second of their four more comprehensive review days, the department requested to explore these vendor's programs more thoroughly.

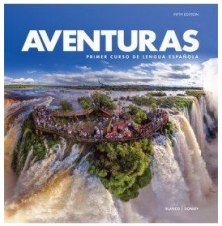
- McGraw Hill
- Savvas
- Vista Higher Learning
- Voces (would be removed from list)
- Wayside Publishing

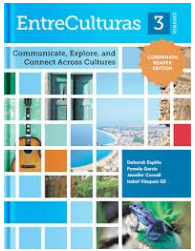
While the other review days did include vendor presentation and question/answer sessions, this review day was for the department to more deeply explore all the resources there were provided (digitally and in print).

The team worked to narrow that list to 3 or less to more thoroughly review.









The materials from McGraw Hill, VHL, Wayside, and Savvas are strong candidates for moving forward due to their;

- comprehensive nature,
- alignment with ACTFL and state standards,
- and robust digital platforms

These programs consistently emphasize proficiency-based and communicative approaches, integrate authentic cultural content, and offer extensive practice and varied assessment opportunities

Instructional Materials Review

Phase III: Comprehensive Review 3

For the third of four more comprehensive review days, the department requested to explore these vendor's programs more thoroughly.

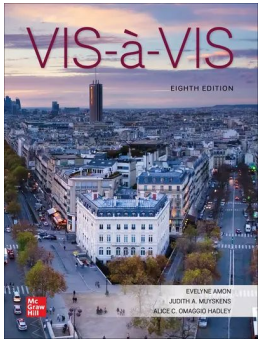
- McGraw Hill (remains only for French)
- Savvas
- Vista Higher Learning (would be removed from list)
- Wayside Publishing

This session did include vendor presentations again, as was the case in session 1. The team focused on looking for evidence that would clearly support the areas within the rubric, input that staff and students had on resources in the past, as well being mindful of the red flags that were identified also in their materials rubric.

The team worked to narrow that list to 3 or less.

French Resource Alignment/Cohesion
The McGraw Hill French series being reviewed, Vis-a-Vis, is the same resource that is now required by the College in Schools French courses, which we have (French IV and French V).





German Resource Alignment
Augenblicke is the resources that is used in College in Schools German courses.

Instructional Materials Review

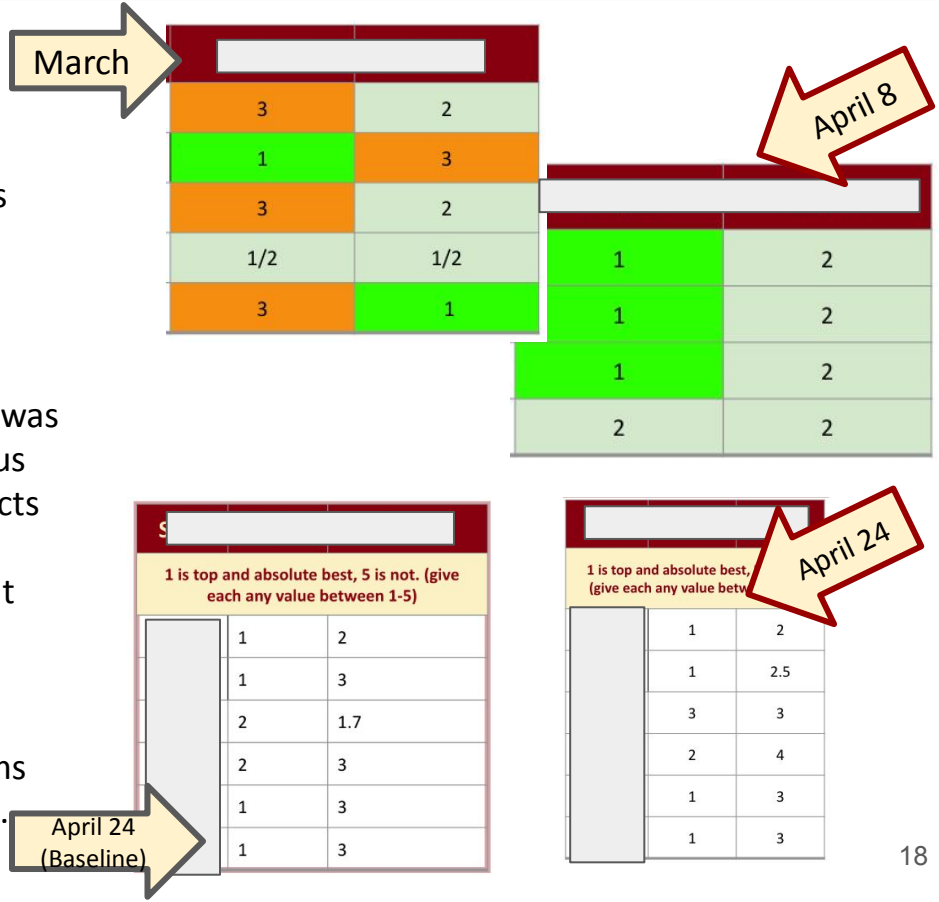
Phase III: Comprehensive Review 4

For their final (of 4) more comprehensive review days, the department requested to explore these vendor's programs more thoroughly.

- Savvas
- Wayside Publishing

On this final day of review, one more vendor presentation was provided by each of the final two products. The most focus at this point was looking for not what separates the products in terms of what they are great at (as they both are strong programs), but instead, being clear about any red flags that might be in the programs that would detract from their overall value.

The images to the right show just how close these programs were at the decision making points in March through April.



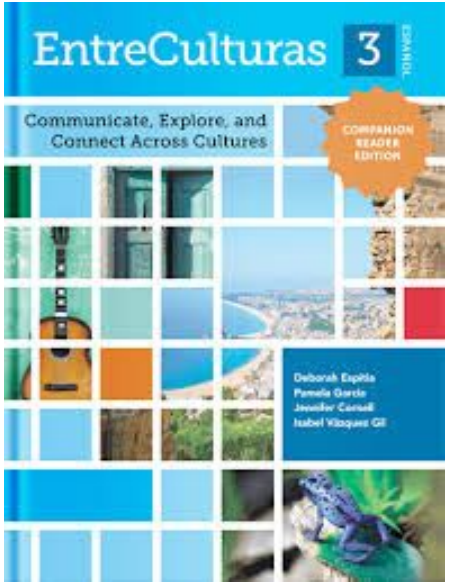
Installation Planning

Revised Timeline Proposal:

- The department proposes to dedicate the upcoming academic year (2025-2026) to the diligent preparation of the curriculum pilot, with a primary focus on Wayside resources, and if needed, a secondary focus on the Savvas resources.
- The pilot implementation would then occur during the 2026-2027 academic year, with the full installation of the new curriculum planned for 2027-2028.

Rationale for Adjustment: This adjustment stems from several key considerations:

- **High School Staffing:** New teaching assignments make adding a pilot potentially counterproductive.
- **New Staff Onboarding:** Some staff need more time to grasp existing scope/sequence before a pilot.
- **Middle School Schedule:** The installation of Spanish IA and IB next year will already complicate scope/sequence.



Next Steps

Next steps for the World Language department include:

- **ACTFL Standards:** Current resources being reviewed align with these standards, and the department will ensure full curricular cohesion once a new program is selected.
- **AAPPL:** Different scenarios for AAPPL implementation are being considered by the team and they will have a future recommendation as they work through those implementation options.
- **Native Language Restoration:** Enroll eligible students in Mankato State University's online Elementary Ojibwe I & II PSEO courses, developing ways to support students with TRHS staff who will be on-site, while monitoring ongoing PSEO requirement modifications.
- **Transitions:** The resource selection process will provide clear alignment, smooth transitions. Smooth transitions will lead to higher retention and persistence rates in levels II-IV.
- **Spanish for Native Speakers:** Plan to engage with students, families, our English Learner staff members, and our Spanish cultural liaison in 25-26's activities.
- **Materials Selection Process:** Dedicate the upcoming academic year (2025-2026) to the preparation of the curriculum pilot which will occur during the 2026-2027 academic year, with the full installation of the new curriculum planned for 2027-2028.

Questions