

BACKGROUND OF PROGRAMMING IN BHM SCHOOLS

BHM Schools provide students with the opportunity to study three world languages at the high school level: French, German, and Spanish. Students may begin their language studies as early as their freshman year or at any point thereafter. Each language is offered at five levels, with Levels 4 and 5 allowing students to earn college credit through the University of Minnesota. These courses are designed to foster linguistic proficiency and cultural competence, preparing students for academic and professional success in an increasingly global society.

The current instructional materials for world language courses were last updated in 2015. Since then, research and best practices in language acquisition have evolved significantly. Modern language instruction emphasizes a balanced approach across all modalities—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—while also incorporating intercultural competence and real-world communication skills. Evidence-based strategies, such as comprehensible input, task-based learning, and technology-enhanced instruction, are now widely recognized as essential for fostering language proficiency.

To align with these best practices and ensure students have access to high-quality, engaging, and effective language learning experiences, updated instructional materials are necessary. A curriculum adoption will allow BHM Schools to provide resources that reflect current pedagogical advancements, support differentiated instruction, and better prepare students for success in an increasingly global society.

PROGRAM STANDARDS

The BHM Schools World Language program aligns with the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Standards as there are not state academic standards in the area of World Languages. These standards emphasize proficiency-based language learning, ensuring students develop real-world communication skills across all modes of language use: interpretive (listening and reading), interpersonal (speaking and writing), and presentational (speaking and writing).

World language assessments are directly aligned with ACTFL standards, utilizing performance-based tasks that emphasize authentic language use in real-world contexts. Assessments integrate authentic

resources—such as articles, videos, and conversations with native speakers—to ensure students engage in meaningful and culturally relevant learning experiences. This focus on authenticity enhances both linguistic proficiency and intercultural competence. The standards are focused on the “Five C’s”:

Communication · Communication in languages other than English

Cultures · Gain knowledge and understanding of other cultures

Connections · Connect with other disciplines and acquire information

Comparisons · Develop insight into the nature of language and culture

Communities · Participate in multilingual communities at home and around the world

These areas emphasize the application of language learning beyond the classroom. These standards are designed to equip students with the skills and cultural understanding necessary to use the language in real-world contexts. By engaging with authentic materials and meaningful interactions, students develop global competence, preparing them to apply their language skills in future careers, academic pursuits, and diverse cultural experiences.

- Connecting uses for readers, historical references, language acquisition reading is a great way to learn new vocabulary, read from context, use deductive reasoning, prepared for CIS courses when they are expected to read more critically
- Providing opportunities for sustained input in reading with readers (plus textbooks) Updated textbook for German was extremely similar, negating the need to update.

PROGRAM VISION STATEMENT

The BHS World Language department believes in facilitating new language skills, confidence to grow and learn, and a more positive and understanding relationship with the world around them.

SUMMARY OF PROCESS FOR REVIEW OF INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES

The district’s Continuous Improvement Process (CIP) requires a comprehensive review of needs, educational research, and potential materials prior to making a recommendation in the Curriculum Adoption Proposal. During the CIP phases of RESEARCH and PILOT over the past two years, the World Language CIP Team engaged in the following activities:

Between the 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 school years, world language teachers reviewed various publishers to evaluate and implement new instructional materials.

The Spanish team determined that Que Chevere (Carnegie Learning) no longer aligns with modern proficiency standards or best practices in language acquisition. In contrast, Entre Culturas (Wayside Publishing) fully aligns with ACTFL World-Readiness Standards, using authentic resources and thematic

units that build on students' real-life connections. Its spiral approach ensures natural progression by reinforcing themes across levels with increasing complexity. Given these advantages, the Spanish team recommends transitioning to *Entre Culturas*. Spanish 1 transitioned to *Entre Culturas* in a staggered approach, purchasing and piloting the level one book during the 2023-2024 school year along with its digital component. Level 2 will now need to purchase the piloted material for the remainder of the adopted materials.

The French department chose to remain with Carnegie Learning, as its thematic structure, ACTFL alignment, and updated resources align with the University of Minnesota's curriculum. Over time, teachers have developed supplemental materials to tailor instruction at BHS. Moving forward, they plan to update and integrate these resources with Carnegie's new materials. While French will require updated textbooks, German will retain its current ones, as curriculum updates have been minimal.

The German department explored Wayside's resources but found them neither cost-effective nor engaging for students. Carnegie Learning's textbook remains largely unchanged since 2015, making a new purchase impractical. However, Carnegie's updated teacher resources, including news articles and thematic videos, will be valuable for instruction.

Additionally, readers provide students with extended text interaction, incorporating history, music, and cultural icons into the curriculum. Student-centered literary circles in Levels 2 and 3 will promote independent comprehension and confidence in the target language. Advanced themes, such as those in *Mit dem Wind in den Westen*—a true story of a family escaping Communist East Germany—offer opportunities for discussions on free speech, migration, and critical thinking.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The world language team recommends the adoption of new resources for all levels of Spanish, updated versions of resources for French, and readers to accompany the resources used in German.

In Spanish, *Entre Culturas* introduces more up-to-date vocabulary and richer cultural content, integrating cultural competency more deeply into the curriculum. The resources are highly authentic, providing students with guided exposure to native Spanish speakers from diverse countries. Additionally, the comprehensive online platform offers access to explanatory videos and all aspects of the curriculum, enhancing the learning experience. The requested readers align with the content and ACTFL standards, offering a deeper lens into culture and fostering critical thinking.

In French, the updated resources will align with best practices and incorporate enriched cultural content. The textbook and teacher materials are dynamic and relevant, providing a diverse selection of cultural videos, interactive projects, and authentic readings. Additionally, students will have opportunities to engage with native speakers from various regions, deepening their linguistic skills and cultural understanding.

In German, the adoption of updated readers will support the deepening students' critical thinking, comprehension, and cultural awareness. These readers provide authentic and varied perspectives, allowing students to explore linguistic and cultural differences across German-speaking regions. By engaging with a range of texts, students will analyze themes, compare cultural practices, and develop an understanding of the language in real-world contexts. The inclusion of diverse narratives fosters engagement, making learning more immersive and meaningful.

The digital platform for Wayside publishing lacks some organization, requiring additional time to navigate and locate all available resources. Challenges have arisen in assigning online activities due to the rostering process managed by Wayside. Ensuring a more seamless process for adding and removing students, as well as reusing student "slots," is essential for improving usability and efficiency. This will support the teaching and learning in each unit.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Spanish: \$70,079.69 / 8 years

German: \$1,440.00

French: \$15,746.66 / 9 years

[World Language Resource Spreadsheet 2024-2025](#)

EVALUATION

Evaluation of the curriculum adoption will be monitored in several ways. Some of the anticipated desired outcomes include:

- Improved assessment data
- Enhanced PLC discussion
- Positive student feedback

Updates from Carnegie to Wayside in Spanish, supplemental updates in German and French including Readers and day to day activities.

NEXT STEPS

Once approved, the resources will be purchased and teachers will begin preparing for implementation. Planning and preparation will take place in August and the implementation of resources will be supported through the district's Continuous Improvement Process.

Timeline for purchase:

- After July 1, 2025

Professional Development needs or preparation for use:

- Summer Curriculum Writing Planning Time
- Spring / Fall Professional Development
- Implementation Time during District Staff Development