

Chinese Immersion Task Force

meeting minutes

25 April 2023 | 4:00 - 5:30



Members present: Moi Mooi Lew, Slone Sandmoen, Janneil Crader, Matt Wachel, Kristin Ray, Kelly Ott, Jennifer Luzenske, Tonya Merrigan, Katie Collier, Kaci Brutto, Courtney Carlson, Gina Knapp, Rachel Benson, Michael Ganheart, Andrea Duffy, Heather Astill, Marisol Cantu, Jenny Cheung, Melissa Bayouth, Jeff Hurst, Melody Shaw, Claire Pan, Elaine Liou, Scott McFarland, Carrie Myers, Lori Ann Ramsey

Members Absent: Kaety Bowers, Jessica Tavelli

Guests Present: Jeremy McFadden, Eric Punswick

Welcome Back

Dr. Tonya Merrigan

Task force members were welcomed to the second meeting of the Chinese Immersion Task Force.

Task Force Norms

Jennifer Luzenske

The task force reviewed the norms group members submitted during the March meeting. Norms included:

- Support each other through active listening, avoiding interruption and signaling a desire to share with a raised hand.
- Ensure equal airtime for all participants so all perspectives are heard.
- When reaching decisions, our goal is two-thirds agreement, but a majority will constitute consensus.
- Share only what we have agreed to share without attaching names; we will protect privacy of individuals.
- Be prepared and come ready to engage. Read the agenda and do any pre-work ahead of time.

- Everyone is responsible for upholding the norms. Acknowledge if you notice we are not doing so.

Task force members expressed a two-thirds agreement with the norms.

Option Development

Jennifer Luzenske

Task force members reviewed how the group will make decisions, a combination of options that are presented to evaluate and options that are co-created by members of the task force.

Non-Negotiables and Assumption & Problem Statements

Dr. Katie Collier

District administrators reviewed items that are parameters, or non-negotiables, as the task force begins to consider ideas for sustaining Chinese in Blue Valley.

- Elementary core curriculum is the prioritized curriculum for all K-5 students.
- When Mandarin instruction is provided, it will occur within the assigned times of the elementary instructional school day.
- The program may be accessed by students from the following student populations*:
 - Gifted Education
 - Special Education
 - General Education
 - English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)

*The above access may occur, in some instances, in consultation with a child's Individualized Education Plan team or in consultation with the ESOL teacher and family.

- All solutions and related details must comply with the district's contractual obligations within the negotiated agreement with the Blue Valley Education Association.
- Teachers must have the appropriate Kansas license for their district-assigned position.
- Teacher salaries and benefits may not be privately funded or exceed the parameters set forth by the negotiated agreement.

- The assignment to specific school sites of specialized instructional programs is an administrative function and is outside the charge of the Chinese Advisory Task Force.
- The program must be administered in a fiscally responsible manner and shall not exceed current program expenses and require human resources consistent with the needs of the program.
- The program outcome must prepare students for the AP Chinese test in high school and provide a path to intermediate-low (speaking/listening) and novice-high (reading/writing) proficiency levels.

The task force also reviewed assumption and problem statements related to sustaining Chinese in Blue Valley.

Program Information & Data

District administrators reviewed information and data that was requested by task force members at the March meeting. A copy of the presentation and data report are available on the [district website](#).

Human Resources | Dr. Eric Punswick

Dr. Punswick reviewed the three qualifications applicants must meet to be considered for employment – KSDE licensed in elementary education, fluent in Mandarin and an exemplary educator.

Additional human resources information shared with the task force included staffing patterns, recruitment and licensure & work authorization.

Fiscal Resources | Kelly Ott & Jeremy McFadden

Kelly Ott and Jeremy McFadden reviewed the three “buckets” school districts have within their budgets and the allowable expenditures from each bucket.

Additional fiscal information shared with the task force included the 2022-23 in-excess costs of the Chinese Immersion program which are more than \$750,000 for this school year. Finally, the task force learned about elementary pupil-to-teacher (PTR) ratios for the elementary level and PTRs in the Chinese Immersion program.

Program Origins & Goals | Kelly Ott

Kelly Ott shared information about the goals established that guide academic decision making and support for the program. These goals continue to be:

- Provide an immersion program that serves the dual purpose of ensuring core academic learning (literacy, math, science and social studies) and developing the Mandarin language.
- Design the Mandarin language program so that students achieve the intermediate-low (speaking/listening) and novice-high (reading/writing) proficiency levels as defined by ACTFL (the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages.)

Academics | Jennifer Luzenske & Kelly Ott

Jennifer Luzenske and Kelly Ott shared information about the framework of the academic day. Students spend half of their day “in” the target language, Mandarin, and the other half in English. Primarily, ELA is taught “on the English side” of the program within the school day while math, social studies and science are taught “on the Chinese side” of the program within the school day.

The task force also learned about additional professional learning opportunities and supports available for staff in the Chinese Immersion program including:

- Curriculum & supporting documents
- Chinese Language Arts
- Resources
- Immersion framework & strategies
- Co-teaching & Blue Valley culture

Closing & Future Planning

Jennifer Luzenske & Dr. Tonya Merrigan

Task force members were reminded that meeting notes and supporting documents will be sent on Fridays following task force meetings. All task force information will also be available on the task force web page.

Task force members recapped the meeting that included a welcome, a review of norms, sharing of non-negotiables and assumption & problem statements and a presentation of program information and data.

Kelly Ott shared that the task force will meet by Zoom on June 7 as several members of the task force will be traveling and/or out of the country. During that meeting, the task force will discuss parameters and the rubric for solutions to sustaining Chinese in Blue Valley.

Dr. Merrigan shared a 2023-24 Chinese Immersion kindergarten update with task force members including the difference between fully enrolled and estimated enrollment. Due to low enrollment numbers, the district will not be able to offer a 2023-24 Chinese Immersion kindergarten class at Valley Park Elementary.