

# REQUESTED DATA REPORT

25 April 2023

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## Program Origins and Goals

As part of the 2015 strategic planning process, one of the top desires of the Blue Valley community was additional opportunities for students that would make them globally competitive. As a result, the Blue Valley School district began offering a 50/50 dual-language Chinese Immersion (CI) option for kindergarteners beginning in the 2017-18 school year at one site, Wolf Springs Elementary (WSE) coinciding with the building's opening. The following year, a second site was opened at Valley Park Elementary (VPE).

Beginning in the 2020-21 school year, the program at VPE was limited to students residing in the VPE residency boundaries and legacy siblings. A classroom addition of 6 classrooms was added at VPE to assist with the additional students for this program. However, the enrollment in traditional classes was larger than anticipated and it was determined there was no room for any students outside of the VPE boundaries.

Since the 2017-18 school year, there have been many successes. There are over 450 students currently in the program and it remains a marquee program for the district. The success and unique nature of the program has drawn families to the district since 2017. Assessments reveal that students are learning Mandarin at the rate set forth in program goals and academic testing in reading and math would put students on par, if not more advanced than their peers. The program provides a unique opportunity for students in Blue Valley and a life-long skill that can differentiate graduates from others in a global economy.

With the conclusion of the 2022 - 23 school year, the first cohort of kindergarten students will advance to middle school. The progression of this complete cohort marked an opportunity for program evaluation aligned with planning for middle school and high school Chinese language instruction opportunities. Additionally, the sustainability of the program required consideration given the increasing reality of shortages of qualified teacher applicants.

The Board of Education, after hearing the initial program evaluation, charged Dr. Merrigan, Superintendent, and the district administration with the creation of a Task Force inclusive of program stakeholders to review, together, current program realities and consider solutions for the maintenance of Mandarin instruction in the district.

# Task Force Guides

## Assumptions

- Mandarin language instruction should continue in the Blue Valley School District.
- The existence of an instructional program should be designed to avoid sporadic program interruption year to year as a result of staffing difficulties.
- The district can maintain its financial obligation to sustain the program designed to provide Mandarin language instruction.
- The current delivery model is not sustainable and needs to be adjusted to increase long-term sustainability.
- The program's proficiency goals of intermediate-low (listening/speaking) and novice-high (reading/writing) and success on the AP Chinese exam remain unchanged.

## Problem Statement(s)

- The ability to attract and retain high-quality KSDE-licensed elementary teachers, who speak Mandarin and have work authorization impacts the sustainability of the Chinese Immersion Program.
- The current delivery model (dual-language immersion beginning in kindergarten) presents challenges in the area of human resources.
- The current delivery model has not been evaluated for efficiency and sustainability since the program's inception; different delivery models that accomplish the original goals have not been explored.

## Non-Negotiables Related to Solution Designs

The following are considered non-negotiables when designing solutions for the continuation of Mandarin instruction in the Blue Valley School District; more specifically when designing potential Chinese Immersion program revisions.

- 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.

## Enrollment & Application Process

Community interest in the program has been strong with 456 total students district-wide participating in the program during the 2022-23 school year. Enrollment numbers at the VPE site have not been as robust as enrollment numbers in the WSE program. It is important to note, the district began to limit enrollment to the VPE program given facility needs and overall growing student enrollment numbers.

| <b>2022-23</b>  | <b>K</b>  | <b>1</b>  | <b>2</b>  | <b>3</b>  | <b>4</b>  | <b>5</b>  | <b>Total</b> |
|-----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|--------------|
| <b>WSE</b>      | 54        | 51        | 49        | 46        | 50        | 34        | <b>284</b>   |
| <b>VPE</b>      | 33        | 33        | 34        | 40        | 32        | n/a       | <b>172</b>   |
| <b>District</b> | <b>87</b> | <b>84</b> | <b>83</b> | <b>86</b> | <b>82</b> | <b>34</b> | <b>456</b>   |

Admittance to the program is accomplished through a lottery process. This lottery, conducted annually in March, has resulted in a waiting list for WSE each year. There is little attrition in the program. There have been a handful of students added after kindergarten; these have been limited to students with either a heritage or immersion background and done after testing for language proficiency.

The chart below describes the program enrollment by year by grade. For this report, end-of-year enrollment is provided. There is variance during the year due to students enrolling or withdrawing from the school/district or program. There have been additions to grades above kindergarten, as space has allowed. In these cases, students' Mandarin language proficiencies were evaluated and deemed on par with the demands of the program at that level. Typically, these students were transferring from another Mandarin immersion program or were new to Blue Valley and were heritage speakers.

| <b>Wolf Springs</b> | <b>K</b>  | <b>1</b>  | <b>2</b>  | <b>3</b>  | <b>4</b>  | <b>5</b>  |
|---------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| <b>2022-23</b>      | <b>53</b> | <b>50</b> | <b>47</b> | <b>43</b> | <b>49</b> | <b>33</b> |
| <b>2021-22</b>      | 54        | 51        | 48        | 50        | 33        | n/a       |
| <b>*2020-21</b>     | 46        | 41        | 47        | 34        | n/a       | n/a       |
| <b>2019-20</b>      | 54        | 54        | 40        | n/a       | n/a       | n/a       |
| <b>2018-19</b>      | 54        | 46        | n/a       | n/a       | n/a       | n/a       |
| <b>2017-18</b>      | 43        | n/a       | n/a       | n/a       | n/a       | n/a       |

| <b>Valley Park</b> | <b>K</b>  | <b>1</b>  | <b>2</b>  | <b>3</b>  | <b>4</b>  | <b>5</b> |
|--------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|
| <b>2022-23</b>     | <b>32</b> | <b>33</b> | <b>33</b> | <b>41</b> | <b>31</b> | n/a      |
| <b>2021-22</b>     | 33        | 32        | 41        | 34        | n/a       | n/a      |

|          |    |     |     |     |     |     |
|----------|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| *2020-21 | 26 | 29  | 22  | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| 2019-20  | 53 | 47  | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| 2018-19  | 51 | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |

\* COVID-19 pandemic – no virtual Immersion option offered.

\*\* Number reflective of number of students who applied, accepted and provided proof of residency as of 4-20-23.

## Program Core Academic Mandarin Language Goals

From the outset of the program, there were goals established that guided 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.)

There are many misconceptions about “fluency.” The term fluency is vague and has a range of meanings for different people. In the academic environment, the word “proficiency” is more prevalent and clearly describes what a learner can do independently in a second language in the areas of speaking, listening, reading and writing. Please note that performance and proficiency are considered differently in language learning. To the right is a chart from ACTFL defining the two. Proficiency is a higher bar and second language learning programs are designed to achieve specific levels of proficiency.

The [ACTFL proficiency levels](#) that were selected for the Chinese program were based on guidance from ACTFL, their recommendations for workplace fluency and their research on attainable proficiency levels based on program design. This [chart from ACTFL](#) describes the proficiency levels needed for oral fluency in the workplace, juxtaposed with the attainable levels of proficiency based on program design. One would be able to see that typical immersion programs should result in students gaining an oral proficiency level of intermediate-low. Readers of the chart would also see that “language learners following 6–8 year sequences of study (e.g., AP)” --like the current 6th grade – AP sequence in Blue Valley-- would have skills for entry-level jobs that require a second language. Higher levels of proficiency require post-secondary study and more. ACTFL does not recommend any one program structure over another.

These goals are measured by a battery of assessments. Students are given the full complement of standardized tests that cover the four core areas that all Blue Valley students are

### Assessing Performance

- **Based on Instruction:** Describes what the language learner can demonstrate based on what was learned
- **Practiced:** Tasks are derived from the language functions and vocabulary that learners have practiced or rehearsed but which are applied to other tasks within familiar contexts
- **Familiar Content and Context:** Content based on what was learned, practiced, or rehearsed; all within a context similar but not identical to how learned
- **Demonstrated performance:** To be evaluated within a range, must be able to demonstrate the features of the domains of a given range in those contexts and content areas that have been learned and practiced.

### Assessing Proficiency

- **Independent of specific instruction or curriculum:** Describes what the language user can do regardless of where, when or how the language was acquired
- **Spontaneous:** Tasks are non-rehearsed situations
- **Broad Content and Context:** Context and content are those that are appropriate for the given level
- **Sustained performance across all the tasks and contexts for the level:** To be at a level, must demonstrate consistent patterns of all the criteria for a given level, all of the time

required to take. In addition, to monitor the program’s effectiveness in Mandarin, students take the STAMP (Standards-based Measurement of Proficiency) test in the 2nd and 4th grades. The STAMP test evaluates all four areas of language proficiency--speaking, listening, reading and writing. Later in this report assessment data is reported.

## Curriculum & Instruction

Students in the CI program receive instruction in and are expected to learn the same learning objectives as found in that grade level’s district-approved curriculum. Additionally, they receive lessons in Chinese Language Arts (CLA) based on a program-specific curriculum. The CLA course is based on language proficiency targets with the end goal of students being successful on the AP Mandarin test in high school. In the table above and to the right are the language proficiency targets for the acquisition of the Mandarin language.

|   | Listening        | Speaking         | Reading     | Writing     |
|---|------------------|------------------|-------------|-------------|
| K | Novice Mid       | Novice Low       | Novice Low  | Novice Low  |
| 1 | Novice Mid       | Novice Mid       | Novice Mid  | Novice Low  |
| 2 | Novice Mid       | Novice Mid       | Novice Mid  | Novice Mid  |
| 3 | Novice High      | Novice High      | Novice Mid  | Novice Mid  |
| 4 | Novice High      | Novice High      | Novice High | Novice Mid  |
| 5 | Intermediate Low | Intermediate Low | Novice High | Novice High |

The program was designed to be a 50/50 dual language immersion program. This means that students should spend half of their day “in” the target language, Mandarin, and the other half in English. An ongoing design challenge for the program leaders is balancing the increased demand for academic rigor with the need for students to continue to develop Mandarin language skills for half the day.

As with many immersion programs, where the student learns core subjects--English language arts (ELA,) mathematics, social studies and science varies by grade level. 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. During the English portion of the day, students also receive reinforcement lessons in mathematics, science and social studies to ensure English academic vocabulary and depth of understanding. The split has been evaluated on a yearly basis and as each grade level was added to the program. Most recently, the district adjusted math instruction to include more instruction in English, based on assessment data. To view the full curriculum documents and a pie chart of instructional minutes visit the [Instruction](#) section of the public-facing [Blue Valley Chinese Immersion Canvas web page](#).

Teachers and students in the program use a *Mandarin Matrix* as the anchor resource for CLA. It is supplemented by *iChinese Reader* and *Fun Chinese*. Families and students have home access to both *Mandarin Matrix* and *iChinese Reader*. Classrooms are also supported by Mandarin-language classroom libraries.

## Professional Learning & Support

Teachers in the Immersion program are provided with added professional learning and support to build partnerships among each duo of teachers, the English-side and Chinese-side teachers of a particular grade. University teacher preparation programs that result in the desired elementary education

licensure focus on the skills and knowledge needed to teach elementary. They do not provide training in the immersion instructional framework. Immersion teachers—both English- and Chinese-side teachers—rarely come to Blue Valley with deep knowledge or experience in immersion. While occasionally, a teacher with an immersion experience in another district joins the program, the vast majority of teachers must be trained once they are hired by Blue Valley. Regardless of previous experience, all teachers require training in Blue Valley’s specific version of immersion to include program structure, resources, Blue Valley learning culture and high-quality instructional design.

The aforementioned support is focused on instruction in the Blue Valley immersion model and using curriculum documents/resources to maximize student learning. Additional staff members are providing job-embedded support. Each Immersion site has an additional 0.5 Instructional Design Coach. These are highly-trained educators who support instructional design and planning, student engagement, classroom management, data analysis and review, as well as provide mentoring both formally and informally. The district World Language Coordinator is actively engaged in support of Immersion teachers and the program. She reviews assessment data at the program level to determine professional learning needs, revise instructional time allocation, determine instructional priorities, and adjust resources. A third job-embedded support for teachers in Immersion is Dr. Sheree Willis. More detail about her background and role in Blue Valley is included in the Chinese-Speaking Expertise & Consultation section below.

Beyond the staff supports, Immersion teachers are provided additional professional learning annually. Prior to the start of school each year, the teachers participate in two days of Immersion-specific learning. As the program has grown each year and due to the number of new teachers, these two extra days are critical to the launch of the school year. In 2022-23, quarterly professional learning experiences were added for Immersion teachers. In addition to the professional growth, these were added to build community among the Immersion teachers across the two program sites. During District-designed professional learning, Immersion teachers engage in sessions relevant to their instructional areas of responsibility. At times, it is specific to Chinese Language teachers receive these opportunities in addition to all other required trainings all elementary teachers attend.

## **Chinese-Speaking Expertise & Consultation**

When the Chinese Immersion Program was being designed prior to the 2017-18 school year, a partnership with the Confucius Institute at the University of Kansas (KU) was established. Colleagues from the Institute agreed to assist with resource evaluation, staffing decisions, recruitment and overall visioning. As a partner, every step of the way, officials in Blue Valley felt comfortable moving forward with an immersion program with the support of the Institute. There was and is a real need for Mandarin-speaking experts who also are familiar with the American school system, aspects of an elementary education and who have deep contacts within the Chinese-American and Chinese communities in the Midwest and beyond.

Blue Valley was informed in December 2019 that the Confucius Institute at KU would close a month later in January 2020. This was a significant blow to the support structure and resource framework for the Blue Valley program. It was in the spring of 2020 when a contractual agreement was inked that allowed a highly-qualified and respected consultant, Dr. Sheree Willis, to work with the BV program.

Dr. Willis has over 37 years of experience in international work, including extensive experience in developing and managing international education projects. She has trained and supervised Chinese

language instructors, managed an extensive K-12 Chinese language distance learning program for 21 schools in five states, developed an innovative curriculum, and led seven federally funded STARTALK summer language programs. Willis' broad previous experiences include management roles in the KU Center for East Asian Studies, the Center for International Business Education and Research, and the Office of Study Abroad, over 10 years of experience as a Chinese-English simultaneous/consecutive interpreter/translator, with an emphasis in educational exchange, and service as a Foreign Service Officer with the U.S. Department of State in Tunis, Shanghai, Beijing, and Kuala Lumpur. She holds B.A. and M.A. degrees in East Asian languages and cultures (Chinese literature) and a Ph.D. in foreign language education from the University of Kansas.

Dr. Willis spends two working days a week with Blue Valley's program; she is on-site in buildings one day a week. Dr. Willis assists teachers in instructional design, provides professional learning in Mandarin, advises on resource adoption, collaborates with district staff on curriculum and supports recruitment efforts. If not for this consultative contract and the high degree of competency of Dr. Willis, the Blue Valley program would further struggle with program administration and teacher support.

### Assessment Data

As part of programming, the STAMP (Standards-based Measurement of Proficiency) test is given to 2nd and 4th grade immersion students. This test measures student proficiency levels in Mandarin. Not only does this test assist teachers in knowing the performance levels of each of their students, but it also provides programmatic data at a district level. Below are the results from these administrations; the most recent results are available. These results indicate that at the 2nd grade level, students have met or exceeded the program proficiency targets. In 4th grade, students far exceeded targets in speaking and listening and met the target for writing and lag in reading.

#### Standards-Based Measurement of Proficiency (STAMP) 2022

##### SCORE KEY

- 1 = Novice Low
- 2 = Novice Mid
- 3 = Novice High
- 4 = Intermediate Low

**WSE**

**VPE**

| 2nd Grade   |             | 4th Grade   |             |             |             |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Speaking    | Listening   | Reading     | Writing     | Speaking    | Listening   |
| <b>2.42</b> | <b>2.70</b> | <b>1.88</b> | <b>2.97</b> | <b>3.30</b> | <b>3.79</b> |
| <b>2.28</b> | <b>3.07</b> | n/a         | n/a         | n/a         | n/a         |

The core academic progress of students in the immersion program is also monitored. Below is a summary of results on the Kansas State Assessment (KAP,) NWEA's MAP test and the Acadience Literacy Screener.

#### Kansas State Assessment (KAP) 2022

% Students Scoring 3 or Higher

| Grade 3 | ELA         |      |              | MATH        |      |             |
|---------|-------------|------|--------------|-------------|------|-------------|
|         | CI          | +/-  | District     | CI          | +/-  | District    |
|         | <b>78.3</b> | 61.5 | <b>+16.8</b> | <b>82.1</b> | 73.0 | <b>+9.1</b> |

|                |             |      |             |             |      |             |
|----------------|-------------|------|-------------|-------------|------|-------------|
| <b>Grade 4</b> | <b>69.7</b> | 66.7 | <b>+3.0</b> | <b>57.6</b> | 55.7 | <b>+1.9</b> |
|----------------|-------------|------|-------------|-------------|------|-------------|

### NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) 2022

% Students Meeting Fall-to-Spring Growth and Average Spring RIT

|                | Reading Growth                         |          |              | Math Growth                            |          |               |
|----------------|--|----------|--------------|--|----------|---------------|
|                | % Meeting Fall-to-Spring Growth Target |          |              | % Meeting Fall-to-Spring Growth Target |          |               |
|                | CI                                     | District | +/-          | CI                                     | District | +/-           |
| <b>Grade 2</b> | <b>51.7%</b>                           | 58.8%    | <b>-7.1%</b> | <b>30.7%</b>                           | 52.7%    | <b>-22.0%</b> |
| <b>Grade 3</b> | <b>61.9%</b>                           | 54.2%    | <b>+7.7%</b> | <b>66.7%</b>                           | 62.2%    | <b>+4.5%</b>  |
| <b>Grade 4</b> | <b>46.9%</b>                           | 51.0%    | <b>-4.1%</b> | <b>57.6%</b>                           | 51.0%    | <b>+6.6%</b>  |

|                | Reading Achievement |          |             | Math Achievement  |          |             |
|----------------|---------------------|----------|-------------|-------------------|----------|-------------|
|                | Average RIT Score   |          |             | Average RIT Score |          |             |
|                | CI                  | District | +/-         | CI                | District | +/-         |
| <b>Grade 2</b> | <b>199.3</b>        | 195.1    | <b>+4.2</b> | <b>197.7</b>      | 195.9    | <b>+1.8</b> |
| <b>Grade 3</b> | <b>211.7</b>        | 205.8    | <b>+5.9</b> | <b>212.6</b>      | 210.3    | <b>+2.3</b> |
| <b>Grade 4</b> | <b>214.7</b>        | 212.8    | <b>+1.9</b> | <b>218.6</b>      | 219.0    | <b>-0.4</b> |

### Acadience 2022

% At or Above Benchmark

Note: Scores are reported in four categories: above, at, below and well below.

|                | CI           | District | +/-          |
|----------------|--------------|----------|--------------|
| <b>Grade K</b> | <b>80.2%</b> | 81.5%    | <b>-1.3%</b> |
| <b>Grade 1</b> | <b>78.8%</b> | 72.5%    | <b>+6.3%</b> |

### Human Resources: Staffing & Work Authorization

When fully staffed, the program is currently designed to include 24 elementary teachers and 2-3 middle school teachers for the full K-8 program. Staffing has been identified as a variable associated with the struggle for program sustainability. The teacher candidate must be licensed by the Kansas Department of Education to teach elementary. This licensure is not achieved simply by completion of a licensure test but must be earned through a university program which is typically four or more years in length. This is in contrast to secondary (middle/high school licensing) in that Mandarin licensure may be achieved through testing to add the endorsement to most KSDE licenses. Licensure expectations in the Chinese Immersion program are consistent with any Blue Valley elementary teacher position. Being licensed in Mandarin as a second language does *not* qualify an individual to teach Chinese Immersion. The candidate must also speak fluent Mandarin. The district has sought to attract native speakers to ensure deep levels of fluency and first-hand cultural knowledge. Currently, the district has



9 applicants for the current openings, yet none of the candidates have Kansas licensure, and not all of the candidates have elementary teaching experience. Finally, a candidate must be an exemplary teacher. The district will not sacrifice high-quality instruction in core areas.

**Qualified Candidates must have all three qualifications to be considered for employment:**



The majority of Chinese teachers who are currently being recruited at the elementary level require work authorizations. Often applying for work authorization for these teachers and candidates comes down to the wire, with the decision cycle being challenging for school systems that work during the August to May school year. The current wait for an individual needing work authorization through sponsorship from the district may require three to five months. This timeframe may be shortened by paying additional funds to expedite the process, and the district has often used this approach in the past. Furthermore, in the latest fiscal year, the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) received over 400,000 H-1B visa applications for a chance at the limited 65,000 H-1B visas that are awarded each fiscal year. H-1B visas are non-immigrant visas for highly-trained professionals to work in “specialty professions” and require a college degree. Applicants for H-1B visas must be sponsored by an employer and have an official offer of employment. H-1B visas are highly competitive and there are no guarantees that they will be issued. The district has utilized a provision previously that utilizes the district’s non-profit status to avoid the USCIS limits previously mentioned and will continue to attempt to use this provision in the future to increase the chances of receiving approval. H-1B visas are valid for three (3) years and may be renewed for another three (3) years. There is considerable time and effort on the part of the Human Resources department and the district’s outside attorney to secure and retain teachers for this program through the work authorization process.

The English-side positions experience relatively high turnover. Since the program’s inception, there have been 23 elementary teachers who have filled the roles of 11 positions. This figure points to a greater turnover rate than is observed at the district and elementary classroom levels. This figure also points to a higher turnover rate than is observed in the Chinese Immersion teaching positions given that during the same timeframe, there were 14 teachers who filled the roles for 11 positions. Many of

the teachers who leave the English-side of the program move to other positions in district elementary schools. This pattern points to the possibility that individuals view the English-side position as an “entry” into Blue Valley. Despite being more specific about the responsibilities of the position when advertising and offering positions, paying an additional stipend and providing enhanced professional learning, the turnover rate has not subsided. Compounding this challenge, these positions are often filled by new-to-profession or new-to-Blue Valley teachers. Currently, there are 20 applicants for an English-side opening, compared to 117 applicants for an elementary grade level classroom opening.

Students in the program are further supported by Chinese Immersion paraprofessionals. Not only do they assist with students in the class on normal days, but they also are able to shoulder the continuity of language learning when the Chinese-side teacher is absent. Without these valuable roles and staff members, students’ Mandarin learning would be interrupted. While the district has been able to staff Chinese-speaking paras, this continues to be an ongoing process with late-filled openings annually.

## District Resources

### Budget

School districts have three “buckets” within their budgets. Each bucket has a specific purpose and that purpose is defined in Kansas state law. In many cases, there is no ability for the district to be flexible with funding sources for a specific expense. The chart to the right describes the allowable expenditures that can be charged to the different types of budget lines. The Chinese Immersion program, like all other academic programming, is funded through the general operating fund. The only expense that is an exception is resources (textbooks, teacher materials, etc.); those items—and most all instructional materials—are purchased using the LRF, which is funded by the learning resource fees paid by families each year.

Chinese Immersion programming expenses are incurred by the district. The district does not receive state reimbursement for expenditures associated with this program. The fiscal component of the program continues to be significant. Based on current expenditure trends, a fully built-out program at maximum capacity would cost the district nearly \$1.1 million per year for a maximum of 648 students. This cost is above and beyond the normal expenditures for students at that grade level. Funding for resources comes from the instructional resource fund (LRF), while the majority comes from general operating fund budget lines assigned to curriculum and instruction. The LRF is funded through the yearly instructional resource fee all families pay. There is no other funding source for program expenses.

| Funding Source         | Allowable Expenditure                   |
|------------------------|---|
| General Operating Fund | Salaries<br>Benefits<br>Utilities       |
| Bond Fund              | Facilities<br>Safety<br>Technology      |
| Capital Outlay Fund    | Construction<br>Maintenance<br>Software |

## Pupil-to-Teacher Ratios within the Program

Blue Valley has maximum pupil-to-teacher ratios (PTRs) for each grade at the elementary level. These ratios are lowest in Kindergarten and gradually increase by grade level. The human resource department applies these PTRs to efficiently staff classrooms. PTRs are guidelines and follow the majority of instances; occasionally there is a situation where a staffing decision is made that does not align with the PTR for that grade level. The chart below describes the PTR for each grade level and the PTR for CI classrooms in the 2022-23 school year.

|                   | K      | 1      | 2      | 3      | 4      | 5      |
|-------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| <b>Target PTR</b> | 23.0   | 24.0   | 25.0   | 27.0   | 28.0   | 28.0   |
| <b>WSE CI PTR</b> | 26.5 ↑ | 25.0 ↑ | 23.5 ↓ | 21.5 ↓ | 24.5 ↓ | 16.5 ↓ |
| <b>VPE CI PTR</b> | 16.0 ↓ | 16.5 ↓ | 16.5 ↓ | 20.5 ↓ | 15.5 ↓ |        |

## In-Excess Costs

The Chinese immersion program requires resources in excess of typical elementary programming. The following chart describes the additional investment required to sustain the program. All yearly costs are based on actual or budget program costs for 456 students (76.8% program capacity.) Budgeted costs reflect the best estimate of final expenditures. Full K-6 enrollment (54 per grade level) at both sites would be 648. The data included below includes budgeted figures. The Chinese Immersion Task Force members will be informed about actual expenditures when the '22-'23 final figures come in for the year.

### Program In-Excess Costs Actual & Budgeted Expenditures 2022-23

| Item and Description  | Cost per Year                       |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Stipend for Program Teachers</b><br><i>Both the Chinese- and English-side teachers receive an additional stipend for the extra time needed to work with additional students and the required high level of collaboration.<br/>Average per teacher: \$2,040 per year</i>  | <b>\$39,340</b><br><i>actual</i>    |
| <b>Regular and Chinese-Speaking Paraeducators</b><br><i>Paraeducators are hired to assist due to the larger class sizes. Chinese paras also assist when the Chinese-side teacher is absent. For each grade level, there are two paras.</i>  | <b>\$510,000</b><br><i>budgeted</i> |
| <b>Chinese-Speaking Consultant</b><br><i>A Chinese-speaking consultant assists with teacher professional learning, training, curriculum development and resource selection.</i>   | <b>\$46,800</b><br><i>actual</i>    |
| <b>Additional 0.5 FTE Instructional Design Coach</b><br><i>An additional half IDC is assigned to sites with Chinese Immersion. These staff members assist the principals with program leadership, provide targeted support for CI teachers and work with district leaders on curriculum and instruction for the program.<br/>0.5 FTE IDC: \$36,000 per year</i> | <b>\$72,000</b><br><i>budgeted</i>  |
| <b>Work Authorization</b><br><i>For each Chinese-side teacher who is not an American citizen, there are immigration costs and immigration attorney fees. Over 80% of our teachers fall in this category.<br/>Visa sponsorship: \$15,000 per three years for one visa with an average of three visa applicants per year</i>                                      | <b>\$45,000</b><br><i>budgeted</i>  |

|  |                                    |
|--|------------------------------------|
| <b>Mandarin Resources</b><br><i>For Chinese Language Arts (CLA) there are additional resources needed above the regular district-provided list. Additionally, funds are allotted to purchase libraries of Mandarin language texts for classroom libraries.<br/> Mandarin Matrix: estimated \$27,500 per year<br/> iChinese: \$25,600 per year<br/> ArchChinese: \$350 per year<br/> Mandarin classroom libraries: \$5,000 per year</i> | <b>\$25,100</b><br><i>budgeted</i> |
| <b>Substitutes for Conferences</b><br><i>Because CI teachers have about twice the number of students, a sub is provided to CI teachers for the additional time to meet with twice the number of parents.</i>   | <b>\$6,600</b><br><i>budgeted</i>  |
| <b>Program OnBoarding &amp; Summer Workshop</b><br><i>In order to train program teachers on program-specific items and onboard new members of the team, there is a separate summer workshop. Each Chinese-side teacher attends for two days, each English-side teacher attends for one day.</i>  | <b>\$4,950</b><br><i>budgeted</i>  |
| <b>Program Maintenance &amp; Personnel Investment</b><br><i>Due to the type of programming and its age, typically a district representative is sent to the ACTFL annual conference to network with other programs, investigate resources and deepen learning as the program is being built out.</i>  | <b>\$3,000</b><br><i>budgeted</i>  |
| <b>ESTIMATE OF CURRENT ADDITIONAL PROGRAM COST</b><br><i>(based on actual enrollment at 76.8% capacity)</i>  | <b>\$752,790</b>                   |
| <b>ADDITIONAL COST PER STUDENT</b><br><i>(based on actual enrollment of 456)</i>   | <b>+\$1,651</b>                    |

## PROGRAM CHALLENGES

### Staffing

Staffing and the complications related to the work authorization status of candidates continue to be significant variables associated with program sustainability. As previously mentioned, the number of applicants is relatively low for both the Chinese and the English side of the program when compared to the current applicants for elementary classroom positions. In addition, the number of applicants who are both Mandarin speaking and hold a current Kansas teaching license is non-existent. When fully staffed, there will be 24 elementary teachers and 2-3 middle school teachers for the full K-8 program.

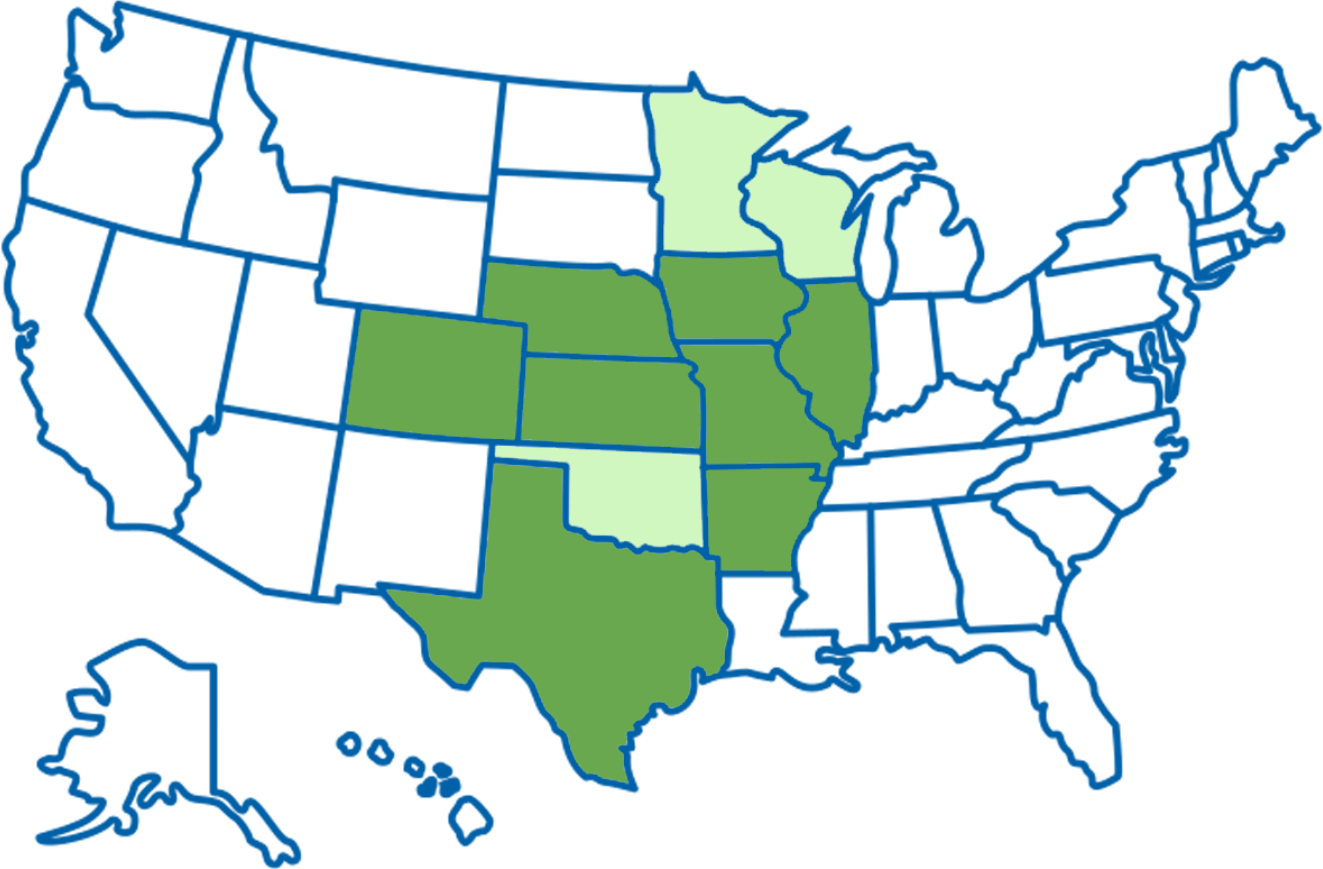
Below is a summary of actions taken by the district to address the hurdles associated with program staffing:

- Attended in and out-of-state teacher recruitment events focused on qualified candidates
  - In 2023, the district attended 28 university job fairs, 13 of which were out-of-state, 5 were virtual
    - 2 Mandarin speaking candidates
    - Overall candidacy is lower than in past years as schools of education continue to see lower enrollment
    - With lower numbers of candidates, some out-of-state universities did not host events or limited the number of districts invited
- Partnered with universities to identify Mandarin-speaking student teachers for placement
  - Through partnership, the district has one Mandarin-speaking student teacher placement for 2023-24 with a focus on elementary education licensure

- Provided signing bonuses (allowable under the negotiated agreement) to attract qualified candidates
- Provided legal assistance to meet work authorization requirements
  - During the fall of 2022 and the spring of 2023, the district engaged in legal assistance for current and future employees
- Advertised opportunities nationally
  - The district utilized uses three national job posting services in usreap.net, k12jobspot.com and indeed.com to promote open positions
  - The district utilized Frontline’s Proactive Recruiting to target qualified candidates both nationally and internationally
- Partnered with KU Confucius Institute ([closed in 2019](#)).
- Utilized STARTALK grant funds (provided by the National Security Agency (NSA) for critical language learning) to host a Mandarin summer camp for multiple years and to seed a permanent program. This grant is no longer available for our district.

**RECRUITING**

The **dark green** represents the states in which the district recruited at universities during the 2022-23 academic year. The **light green** represents states in which the district has recruited previously.



## Closing

The nature of this report was intended to provide all Chinese Immersion Task Force team members with a common understanding of the following program facts. The data included in this report was requested by members of the committee. This report and the following data were provided during the April 25, 2023 meeting:

- Program History
- Assumptions
- Problem Statements
- Non-Negotiables for Solution Designs
- Curriculum at a Glance
- Performance Data
- Budget; Program Expenses & In-Excess Costs
- Human Resources; Recruitment, Retention, & Requirements