

William Annin Program FAQs

How is the William Annin World Language Program different than the elementary Latin program?

In the elementary program, students had one Latin class every week. At William Annin, they have the choice of French, Italian, Latin, or Spanish. The students will have class in the language of their choice every day for the entire year. Whereas the Latin program was exploratory, the World Language Program at William Annin emphasizes the integration of reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

May my child switch languages after 6th grade?

No, students must take the same language for all three years at the middle school. This will enable student to develop higher levels of language proficiency. Introductory language courses are only offered for 6th grade students.

I have heard that some languages are more difficult than others. Is this true?

No language course is inherently more difficult than others. In fact, the sixth grade curriculum, available at www.bernardsboe.com, shows that the topics for all the languages are the same.

In all of our language courses, students have experienced a high level of success. In previous years, as a tool for program development, 8th grade students participated in a pilot assessment of language skills. Scores across languages were consistent and impressive. In addition to high levels of proficiency, students have won awards in all courses including high scores on the National Latin and ATF French exams, and awards from William Paterson University in poetry recitation in many languages.

My child has no idea what language to pick. What are some factors to consider?

While the topics studied in each language are similar in the sixth grade, the focus may be different depending on the language. If your child enjoys reading, decoding, and history, Latin may be a good choice as the focus is on culture, history and written language. The three modern languages, Spanish, Italian, and French, have a similar focus on the four language skills of reading, writing, speaking, and listening. The study of the cultures of these languages is an integral part of each course.

For all students, motivation is highly indicative of success in language study. If your child displays an interest in any of the cultures, languages or products of studied cultures, they should choose the corresponding language course.

How will my child hear about the world language program?

Each January, a team of world language teachers makes a brief presentation to each fifth grade class about the world language program. Information about the program in general is presented and students have the opportunity to ask questions about the classes and languages. They also discuss what students already know about each language and how their knowledge and interest may match with language choices.

What happens after the Annin program? Are all of these languages offered at the high school?

At the high school, students have the opportunity to continue with the same language, add an additional language, or switch languages. At Ridge High School, introductory to AP level language courses are offered for all of the languages offered at William Annin.

My child is interested in a language not currently offered. Does the school district consider additional language offerings?

We survey parents and/or students periodically to determine if our current program is meeting the community need. If we find that we have significant interest in a language or course that is not offered, we consider additional offerings.

I have never studied the language my child wants to take. How will they get extra help if needed?

Many parents are hesitant to allow their child to take a language that they have no experience with due to a concern that they will not be able to assist their child with the coursework. However, all world language teachers are aware that many parents will not be able to provide their child with extra support. To help students, teachers are available for extra help, provide websites with online resources, and offer parents suggestions on how to assist students in language learning even if they are not experienced in the language themselves.

What are the expectations of the sixth grade language classes?

At William Annin, we consider the world language course to be a sixth academic course. Therefore, teachers will have the same expectations of students that they would have in a sixth grade math or history class. Students will experience homework 2-3 nights per week to provide additional practice of language structures. Students will also be assessed by a variety of assessments including tests, quizzes, and projects.

What if my child has an IEP?

Decisions about whether a world language is appropriate will be discussed at your child's annual review meeting. Keep in mind that at WAMS, special education students can participate in a class titled academic support. Since 6th graders have two elective periods per day, a choice will have to be made in terms of whether a world language, academic support, or cycle classes occur in those two periods. All decisions are based upon the individual needs of a student.

Where can I get additional answers about the program?

For further information on the world language program, please contact Mary Asfendis, Supervisor of World Languages at masfendis@bernardsboe.com.