



Compiled Notes from the North K-8 Language Academy Community Engagement Session Wednesday, November 4, 2020 at 6:00 pm

Please Note: The notes listed below are taken from the facilitators' notes from the session. Nothing has been added or changed.

Introduction (Google slide presentation led by Walter Hall)

Walter will introduce the questions and additional context for Breakout Session 1.

Breakout Session 1

Purpose:

- Have participants engage in a conversation about grade level considerations in order to prepare a recommendation that will be shared with CMS Executive Staff that balances program fidelity of the language program with the best use of resources

Additional Context:

Curricular Considerations:

- Students in kindergarten and grade 1 would be full immersion students, meaning that 100% of instruction will be provided in the target language.
- Students in grades 5-7 would participate in language exploration through elective courses, which means students explore a new language while being taught core content in English.
- Students in grade 2 would either participate in full immersion or language exploration, but it would depend on how many students opt to attend North K-8 who have previous immersion experience. Putting students in full immersion without previous experience past grade 1 would not allow for students to be successful in the program. The language content missed in grades K and 1 would significantly impact their immersion language proficiency levels.

Entry Considerations:

- Students in kindergarten and grade 5 would have to participate in the upcoming School Choice Lottery to obtain a seat at North K-8.
- Students in grades 1, 2, 6 and 7, who live in the violet transportation zone, would automatically be assigned to North K-8 instead of South Academy of International Languages (formerly Waddell Language Academy) to continue their instruction. These students can opt to stay at SAIL without transportation.
- Students in grades 5 and 8 who currently attend SAIL would be grandfathered to stay there because North K-8 would *not initially* offer full immersion for grades 5 and 8.

Questions Posed to Groups:

- What are the benefits of opening North K-8 with only full immersion in the elementary grades?
- What are the benefits of opening North K-8 with an immersion/language exploration hybrid in the elementary grades?

Notes from Breakout Room #1:

- Could grades 3-5 potentially be included for full immersion if there were enough current Waddell students to make a class?
- Students acquire language faster in earlier grades through immersion
- Immersion in all grades would create more cohesion and community - creates a certain culture and set of expectations
- Rising 6-7 from Waddell - could they continue with immersion language and add new language like current Waddell MS?
- Siblings? - what about upper grades?
 - Transportation options?
 - Shuttle stops and ASEP?
- Grandfathering challenges?

Notes from Breakout Room #2:**What are the benefits of opening North K-8 with only full immersion in the elementary grades?****Parent 1:**

- The students will learn to speak, read, and write in the languages offered, and be fluent by 5th grade

Parent 2:

- Open the school as a KI-1
- Add a grade level each year

Question: Is the school a full magnet or partial magnet?**What are the benefits of opening North K-8 with an immersion/language exploration hybrid in the elementary grades?****Parent 1:**

- None

Parent 2:

- Beneficial to parents who have multiple students that learn differently
 - Some students will benefit from immersion/language exploration hybrid
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Notes from Breakout Room #3:

- Generally agree that the immersion given the choice between the two can both be successful but immersion is the more desirable choice. Understanding that there are some logistical issues around filling the grade level. The question that keeps coming back is are first graders going to be allowed to participate in the first round of the lottery will it be open to students who have no experience in language immersion as a first grader. How can we maintain that language program that has to be built a year at a time.
 - Initial concern in a full immersion program if a child struggles with some aspect of full immersion - does that impact their ability to be successful in their general instruction with basic content? In this case the hybrid model may be best
 - The academic outcomes that Waddell has are very positive =. Testing scores were some of the best in the district and the state.
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Notes from Breakout Room #4:

- Interested in immersion and curious about the implications of full immersion if the student's first language is English. To what extent would the student's day be conducted in the target language?
 - Would the program expand to upper grades as it grows?
 - I think having full immersion, especially with kids this age is really beneficial. We have a child who entered a full immersion preschool recently. She went from knowing only a few words in Spanish to seeming to understand conversations in Spanish within a month. It was shocking how quickly she was able to understand without issues. I think for elementary grades, I would vastly prefer full immersion.
 - I think offering full immersion in a hybrid model would fulfil 2 purposes. 1: kids in Waddell now could transfer to North K-8 and benefit from full immersion, and 2: kids who have considered immersion but did not due to distance could enroll the kids in the hybrid classes and get them up to speed in the target language without throwing them right into full immersion.
 - I would only really want the hybrid model for kiddos who don't start with the full immersion.
 - I agree with the person who was talking in our break out. Providing the hybrid for the first few years I think will really provide better numbers
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Notes from Breakout Room #5:

- Full Immersion
 - Provides a parallel experience to Waddell
 - Expectation that this is what the new school would be...
 - Immersion/language exploration hybrid
 - Start K-2 as full immersion, phase in the upper levels first as language exploration
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Notes from Breakout Room #6:

- What are the benefits of opening North K-8 with only full immersion in the elementary grades?
 - They have not been indoctrinated into normal school settings - easier to pick up on language and become acclimated
 - K and 1st graders are sponges and not set in their learning ways
- What are the benefits of opening North K-8 with an immersion/language exploration hybrid in the elementary grades?
 - For 2nd graders, offering both options might be good. It could be overwhelming. It would depend on parental support at home to help them really grasp the language if they did not have the previous experience. The time commitment would need to be dedicated at home to be sure kids can stay on track.

Notes from Breakout Room #7:

- Only Full Immersion:
 - Might make the hiring process a bit easier
 - Students-- be immersed as early as possible. Students will benefit greatly from the target language, especially if not spoken at home
 - K-1 → great to be fully immersed Limitation: possible limitation; older students acted like models. You might not have that if you start K-1
- Immersion/Language Exploration Hybrid:
 - Less of a barrier to entry for students without language experience. This would help families who move to Charlotte area after the school choice lottery
 - Widens the net; helps us fill the program. Expands access, gives another option
 - Middle school-- another geographic option in north area
 - Relieves burden on language academy in the south. Helps keep them overloaded

Notes from Breakout Room #8:

- Benefits of Full Immersion in elementary grades
 - Gets the kids up to speed a whole lot faster in the target language
 - Gets students more proficient in the target language more quickly
 - Due to young age, students aren't as inhibited
 - Sets the bar and expectation for the future (for future years in full immersion)
- Benefit of Immersion/Language Exploration Hybrid in elementary grades
 - Utilizing classroom space well
 - Exposure to a third target language as a special/elective (if possible)
 - More frequent exposure for students who may not have had previous dual language experience and will carry on into middle school
 - Question: Would this model create staffing challenges?

Back to Main Session - Walter will introduce the questions and additional context for Breakout Session 2.

Breakout Session 2**Purpose:**

- Have participants engage in a conversation about the languages they would like the CMS Executive Staff to consider when opening North K-8

Additional Context:

- The school will likely open with 3 languages with 2 classrooms per language.
- It is very difficult to staff a Japanese program, so there would be grandfathering provisions put in place for students studying Japanese at SAIL to stay there.
- Finding appropriate secular curriculum materials are very difficult to teach the Arabic language.
- A Spanish language program is already in place within the violet transportation zone at Oaklawn Language Academy.
- Spanish language programs in CMS are two-way programs, which is a different model than the one-way

model that is planned for North K-8. It is not recommended to run two different program models within the same school.

Question Posed to Groups:

- What languages should we offer at North K-8 Language Academy?

Notes from Breakout Room #1:

- French - opportunities for francophone African families
- German - job opportunities (200 German owned companies)
- Chinese - this is still highly sought after for the Violet zone
- Italian-
- Arabic
- Hindi
- Should consider a new language if Chinese is already being offered by charter schools in the area, could become a draw for the new language
- Cherokee
- ASL
- Could we consider one strand per language to include more languages?
- Could we consider immersion for two languages and FLES for two other strands for multiple grade levels until fully articulated?

Notes from Breakout Room #2:

Parent I:

- Spanish One way model in the northern zone
- Will Wadell (Elementary and Middle School) still be a full county magnet
- French
- Chinese
- German

Parent II:

- German
- French
- Chinese or Japanese

Parent III:

- Chinese
- Match the languages at North Meck

Notes from Breakout Room #3:

- German- currently offered with his kindergartener it makes sense to offer what's already been available. Almost half of the students have one parent or both that speak German
- Waddell says it's full immersion. The math and reading is what they have seen in the target language.
- Chinese/ mandarin mom is chinese and has worked in China before.
- Working in the business world Mandarin is valuable in that particular market
- Spanish! Can it be offered as it is offered at Oaklawn. Child will be going to 2nd grade.

Notes from Breakout Room #4:

- What languages should we offer at North K-8 Language Academy?
- There is obviously a benefit to any language, no matter what it is, but what we really talked about as a family is schools being part of a community and shouldn't we be giving ourselves more access to the communities we have in Charlotte? The big languages we hear are Spanish and Chinese, and for me personally these would be the languages that I would consider for my kids. I want my child to have the chance to engage with her community.
- I agree. Honestly I was really looking forward to Spanish being one of the languages offered from a cultural standpoint because this is my background and I would love for my daughter to be able to take advantage of

that. I had looked at Waddell and Oaklawn and logistically living in Huntersville it would not be possible for me to take my daughter there even though I would really love to. Having that option here in the North zone would be really fantastic. While every language would be good, I really truly believe that Spanish would be a huge asset to have in the community.

- (Participant's daughter agrees and says English is boring).
- I am thinking like the participants who spoke earlier but I would really like my son to have a practical language. Looking at the trends and the area for where we plan on being long term, I want my son to be able to navigate easily, and so I would really prefer Spanish.
- Could you provide the survey results that provided the French and German were requested the most? (Per Walter: This is from lottery data, these are the programs that have the longest waiting list, not necessarily survey data).
- -thanks for the answer. based on that, I'm in favor of offering French and German
- If there is a big want for Spanish, would there be a consideration for doing full immersion for Spanish similar to the Waddell model instead of dual/partial immersion?
- Has staffing been an issue?
- One of the things that has made Waddell great has been high parent involvement and the retention of staff. Wonderful staff, keeping the benefits and what we have learned from Waddell and take it to North K-8 would be a recipe for success.

Notes from Breakout Room #5:

- Mandarin
- Spanish
- German
- French
- Consider other high-frequency languages in CMS (e.g., Vietnamese)

Notes from Breakout Room #6:

- I would want my child to be in a language that could be used later in life, career-wise, like Spanish, Chinese & French.
- There are no languages off the table.

Notes from Breakout Room #7:

- German & French are strong programs at Waddell-- great program to offer. Large demand for languages
- Japanese would be great for a mirror program in North but could be hard to staff
- Huntersville/Cornelius area-- Spanish would be a great third language
- Spanish
- Students can learn in their home language in addition to English. Families want their students to be strong in that language, as well.
- Many Latinx families in area-- Spanish would be a huge draw! Great way to embrace the community
- **Top 3:** German, French & Spanish
- Also discussed possibility of another romance language-- maybe Italian? Latin?
- Question: Why is Spanish offered as dual language model? This could be a limiting factor. Does it have to be taught that way? Is it most effective?
- Elementary academics in English for elementary-- but Is it possible to incorporate Spanish as an elective in middle school? [Waddell currently has this as an option.]

Notes from Breakout Room #8:

- German (son is in K at SAIL)
- French, German, and Chinese (charters that offer Chinese may not provide transportation); a new language might be tricky considering time constraints
- Chinese (also French and German), since there is already a Spanish option in the Violet transportation zone

Back to Main Session - Walter will introduce the question for Breakout Session 3.

Breakout Session 3

Purpose:

- Have participants discuss any other information that they deem important for CMS Executive Staff to consider

Question Posed to Groups:

- Is there any other information you would like for us to consider when making recommendations to CMS Executive Staff?

Notes from Breakout Room #1:

- Siblings and grandfathering for transportation - if parents choose to remain at Waddell (concerns about students in grades 3-4)
- Could we do 1 strand K-5 immersion, and one strand as K-1 immersion with 2-5 as FLES/Exploring language? (Hybrid model), this would phase out as the K-1 cohort moves up.
- Grades 6-8 have option for immersion continuation and new to language study
- What is the minimum number of students required to open a section/class?
- Sibling guarantee for younger siblings

Notes from Breakout Room #2:

- Parents did not offer any information they would like to have considered by the CMS Executive Staff. The parents asked clarifying questions to Walter about the program.

Notes from Breakout Room #3:

- How can Waddell be recreated?? How did the transition work when it went from SMith Language to Waddell the culture and the magic of the school is great. How can we recreate this? Welcoming admin and staff.
- Do we feel like the timeline to get things rolling is good? Do we have the appropriate amount of time to make things work at maximum capacity
- Communicate final details as soon as possible. Hybrid vs full immersion. What languages etc. More aggressive push to market this school if we want to fill seats because it is little known. How do parents go through the lottery process and pick that as their top 3? If we haven't fully developed the framework of this school?
- Possibility of 1st grade being a lottery option, if we are ok with students coming in without having the kinder experience.

Notes from Breakout Room #4:

- I'm very new to CMS in general and North Carolina. I'm curious about what kind of extra classes this school might be providing (enrichment, extracurricular, etc.), and if there are ...I would like for there to be a thought about not just teaching the language but teaching the culture of these languages as well. Making sure that children are not just learning about our history but the history of others and the community. Not just our community but the community that we have across the world to give kids the chance to at least taste what it's like to be from somewhere else.
- I totally agree with that. I think part of having any kind of language immersion or language program should be that cultural immersion and cultural program and the arts and that it's not just about the language but what the language represents and who the language represents.
- I am at year 10 in Waddell and I have a lot of experience with this program, and I am a parent.
- Question: One question or consideration is that the name of the school is really reflective of the community and that it is inclusive and thoughtful to the Charlotte community.
- Even though this may be a full immersion or partial immersion, their testing requirements are the same as other schools, correct? So I just want to make sure that they are still being supported and that these supports are in place to support testing even as we provide this amazing opportunity for kids to have this second language education.
- -response to breakout session 1: I feel very strongly that the school should open K-1 with the 90/10 model. I think this is best practice because this is what worked in Waddell. This is the best way to get this started and it is really important for everyone to get a strong start and just grow one year at a time (because this would create an 'us' vs 'them' for kids who are in full immersion vs. hybrid). You would also be hiring teachers who would know that they would be replaced in the long run with native language speaking teachers, and this does not sit well with me. Because this is supposed to be a mirror school to Waddell, it would really be important to have the same languages as Waddell. 3 languages: French, German, Chinese - and we also have the continuing program in high school with North Meck. (2 parents agreed with the points that this parent

made). This provides great opportunities for North Meck students to be mentors and come work with the Waddell students. Keeping the same languages as Waddell would also allow the new school to do combined languages and combined field trips with Waddell. You also have already established a curriculum at Waddell and this would be easier to replicate rather than adding other languages and having to reinvent the wheel. If you do not have the languages in high school, it is another challenge to try to get this in place in high school.

- I really agree with this point. We chose Waddell for our Kindergarten and we are looking at this North school hoping that German will be offered. There is a large German community, many suppliers, a lot of support. I would be very disappointed if German were not offered at the new school.
- I also think you could start K/1 and then also start 6/7. This would alleviate crowding if there is overcrowding at the other schools.

Notes from Breakout Room #5:

- For students who test into immersion programs, is there an option to set up classes/groups with different ability levels (such as students who speak and understand but can't write in the language)?
- How do we communicate out to families the decision about what format this will be?
- Will there be virtual open houses for this new school?
- Will students be moved from SAIL to North K-8 for those grades? Is it an option or required?
- Need to make sure that the staff has the expertise that they expect from Waddell (people may not want to move away from the established Waddell)
- Waddell has a really good music program. Want to make sure that there are strong arts and other options at the new school.
- Ensure that cultural aspects of the language are included in the school as well.
- Will Waddell teachers be given the option to transfer to the new school?

Notes from Breakout Room #6:

- Parents did not offer any information they would like to have considered by the CMS Executive Staff.

Notes from Breakout Room #7:

- If demand is high, how will language programs be enhanced at other schools in the area? How can we ensure that other students have access to language opportunities? How can we offer language programs at other elementary and/or middle schools?
- Equity of access for people in violet zone → New programs must ensure success for all students.
- Support recruitment for teachers-- can CMS sponsor teachers from other countries to come here in order to recruit?
- Cabarrus, Kannapolis, etc.. uses Participate for hiring, recruiting and staffing. Retention of teachers can be an issue.
- Staff must be well supported-- investment in hiring process.
- Unique spin on school in this area -- diversity-- would love an emphasis on global education. Embrace community, global awareness, future-ready students
- Develop into fully fledged program like Waddell. Strong parent involvement-- students are carefully placed. Warm global community.

Notes from Breakout Room #8:

- It's important to open the school with students who are committed/invested in the full immersion program.

Back to Main Session - Walter will explain the next steps for participants (completing surveys, checking the North K-8 page on the website, etc.) and the next steps for the planning committee. Walter will close the meeting.

**After the last breakout session, there was a Q&A opportunity.
Here are those questions and additional feedback:**

- Spanish would be my biggest 3rd choice, has there ever been a consideration for adding ASL (American Sign Language) to one of the programs? There is an ASL college program at CPCC North within about a mile of the North Language Program. Population based, ASL may be the next biggest “language” in the area particularly with NC school for the deaf in Morgantown with a huge ASL population!
- Will there be an option for students who are going into 6th grade to take a language “immersion” track that is higher-level than the typical language exploration track?
- How many immersion students would you need to warrant a classroom for immersion in 6th grade? For other grades?
- Lots of questions around grandfathering and the sibling guarantee and transportation, so those things would need to be made clear to families so that they know their options for younger siblings
- Would families be able to choose their language in the lottery?
- Wouldn't that impact the teacher allotments if they lost 15 kids in 2nd grade, as an example. Could you make a special waiver to allow SAIL allotments to remain the same?
- Would we be able to know the experience and make-up of teaching staff before making a choice to go to the North School?
- There are a few former Waddell students who are graduating from college with teaching degrees.. ;)