



Classical Charter School Association

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CCSA BOARD EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM (WORLD LANGUAGE) COMMITTEE MINUTES

November 2, 2015

3:10 – 4:10 pm

Classical School Library

1. **Call to Order:** Mrs. Bielmeier called the November 2, 2015, meeting of the Classical Charter School Association (CCSA) Board Educational Program Committee on World Language to order.
2. **Roll Call:** Robyn Hernandez Nagreen, Stacey Foley, Tom Bomann, Anna Cihlar, Joanne Bielmeier, Sarah Roe, and Kiran Chawla
3. **Guest Attendee(s):** None
- 4.– 6. **Review Existing Language Program:**
 - One of the 2015-16 strategic planning goals of the CCSA Board, based on feedback from the staff, is to review our current Writing and Language programs. The CCSA Board voted in February 2015 to add a Latin program to the curriculum. This committee's goals are to reevaluate our language program, review our Spanish curriculum and discuss the implementation of the Latin program, and bring a comprehensive proposal to the CCSA Board for vote.
 - Reviewed Classical School Spanish Philosophy, the vision of producing confident speakers/coherent writers/critical thinkers, and how our language program aligns with Core Knowledge and the Classical Framework
 - Spanish Philosophy:
 - Curriculum checklist are on the J drive and available for review
 - Currently, Spanish instruction is based on the curriculum checklists and is combined with vocabulary and grammar concepts from Spanish textbooks (Gr. 6 – 8). Instructional methods are guided by the philosophy of the school.
 - Spanish workbooks are likely used more regularly in class than the textbooks. Textbooks are useful for the listening and grammar activities. The textbooks also contain explanations in English, which are helpful for those new to learning Spanish.
 - With the implementation of Latin, this committee needs to consider if it is still possible to prepare students for Level 4 Spanish as freshmen in High School, as is defined as the goal of the program in the Spanish Philosophy document
 - Spanish textbooks are grammar focused; improved balance between grammar and conversational Spanish is desirable
 - Some concepts, including vocabulary, may benefit from reinforcement similar to the manner concepts are repeated in Saxon
 - Achieving balance between grammar and the three modes of communication (interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational), and reinforcing key concepts/vocabulary necessitates review of the checklists and textbooks
 - The vision of producing confident speakers/coherent writers/critical thinkers:
 - Spanish:
 - Majority of Classical graduates are considered exceptional Spanish students in high school
 - Immersion opportunities such as Concordia are very beneficial to students learning conversational skills. Despite having more Spanish instruction than most students from other schools at Concordia, Mr. Bomann noted that, in general,

Classical School students do not seem to have significantly better conversational skills or they are not confident enough to utilize their skills.

- With regard to producing coherent speakers, some Spanish teachers spend 5 or 10 minutes at the beginning of the class having conversation with students in Spanish. This is a possible area, along with other options, to develop as a best practice throughout the Spanish program.
- With regard to producing coherent writers and critical thinkers, the grammar focus of the checklists and textbooks seems to be working; however, the committee would like to consider adding the reading of more literature in Spanish.
- Latin:
 - Currently, Greek and Latin roots are taught as a vocabulary connection to the English language.
 - It was noted that Latin also has many connections with Spanish root words
 - With regard to producing coherent writers, learning the grammar of Latin reinforces the student's understanding of the reasons for, and the use of, the parts of speech (e.g., nouns, verbs, prepositions, plurals, verb tenses).
 - With regard to producing critical thinkers and confident speakers, instruction in Latin results in training the mind to take on the qualities of the subject: logic, order, discipline, and structure.
 - The use of songs and rhymes helps with language learning and could be a best practice to develop further throughout the Latin program. It is currently used in the lower grades for Spanish.
 - Greek and Latin root instruction will become part of Latin instructional time with the implementation of a Latin program. This time savings, in addition to the elimination of Shurley Grammar instruction in the grades formally studying Latin, was the proposal considered by the CCSA Board to implement a Latin program. Adjustments to this implementation proposal are among the possible work products of this committee.
 - While the homeroom teachers in attendance felt their current knowledge of Latin was thin, as professionals they understand the benefits to Latin instruction and are willing to do the work to learn and deliver the curriculum given an appropriate timeline. Having a master of Latin is key to implementing the Latin program, especially in the upper grades.
- Language program alignment with Core Knowledge (CK) and the Classical Framework
 - Current grammar focus of the checklists and textbooks for Spanish and focus on the study of Latin and Greek roots as vocabulary is in line with Core Knowledge.
 - Within the Classical Framework, the instruction of language becomes more about "how to think and what to do."
 - From a Latin perspective this looks like: How to think = vocab connections and grammar synthesis; and what to do = reading great works in original language to gain deeper meaning in terms of virtues, etc.
 - Developing a tie to literature would be a possible classical approach to the study of Spanish

7. Next Steps (Short-term/Long-term goals):

- Will discuss more at the next meeting. Possible topics include:
 - The development of a Latin philosophy document similar to the Spanish philosophy document and a preliminary implementation plan
 - Further identification of best practices in our existing language program and how they produce proficiency and mastery as outlined in the Spanish Philosophy document
 - Taking a classical approach to utilizing the best practices in Spanish instruction in the SOG and SOL, including ways to reinforce key concepts and vocabulary
 - The utilization of literature in the Spanish program
 - The development of Spanish assessments based on all communicative skills of language learning
 - The value of looking into a Direct Instruction Spanish program
- ACTION Items:
 - ALL - Review language checklists (Spanish and Latin/Greek roots) on J drive
 - Are they in line with current practices?; What adjustments would you propose?

- Mrs. Bielmeier - Speak with Norma Meidl to encourage involvement on committee and get feedback on best practices.
- Mrs. Bielmeier – Contact high school Spanish teachers for feedback on Classical School students' skill levels upon entering high school and high school counselors for Spanish CAPP and Latin course curriculum
- Ideally we should have a preliminary Latin implementation plan in place prior to winter break and a summer symposium on the topic.

8. **Public Comment:** None

9. **Motion to Adjourn:** Mrs. Bielmeier informally adjourned the meeting.