

Information for Rising 8th Grade Students from the World Languages Department

This is a year involving some big decisions for our students and parents. We hope that your children are anxious to begin the study of a world language in the 8th grade in order to broaden their understanding of other cultures and accept a new academic challenge. It is a stated goal of Fairfax County Public Schools that all students will graduate proficient in a world language. We would like to share a few factors that might influence your decision about a language class.

- Eighth grade students at Rachel Carson have the opportunity to take a full-year, high school credit course in French, Japanese, Latin, or Spanish.
- The credit and grade will go on the student's high school transcript. However, parents may have the course removed from the transcript if they are not totally happy with the student's grade.
- The advanced high school diploma that is earned by most FCPS students and is recommended for college-bound students requires a minimum of 3 years of study of one language, or 2 years each of 2 different languages.
- Most colleges require a minimum of 2-3 years of language study in order to be eligible to apply. Chances of acceptance to selective colleges are increased when students have 4/5 years of study in grades 8-12.
- Both AP and IB courses are usually 5 year sequences. Any student who does not begin language study in the 8th grade may find it difficult or impossible to have access to these courses. Of course, these are the language courses that can now add a full point to a student's grade point average.
- Students wishing to earn the IB Middle Years Program Certificate at the end of 10th grade at South Lakes High School should definitely begin their language study in 8th grade. Also, students considering the IB Diploma Program should begin study in 8th grade in order to take IB language in 11th/12th grades.
- Students who opt to not continue language study for 4th/5th years can make room for extra electives and academy programs by completing their language requirement in grades 8-10.

Please feel free to contact Ms. Tricia Heininge, RCMS World Languages Department Chairperson, with questions. Her email address is tricia.heininge@fcps.edu.

Ms. Heininge has taught in both IB and AP programs for FCPS.