

# Predicting Languages Taught in Washington High Schools

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# About the Mapping & Enhancing Language Learning (MELL) Project

- Initiated in 2006 by four National Resource Centers at the University of Washington's Jackson School of International Studies with US Department of Education Title VI grant funding
- Some funding from State Innovations Grant to the Washington State Coalition for International Education
- **Goal:** Capture longitudinal data following 2004 World Languages Survey

# MELL Partners

## UW partners:

- Center for Global Studies
- Center for West European Studies (CWES)
- East Asia Center (EAC)
- Ellison Center for Russian, East European and Central Asian Studies (REECAS)
- Language Learning Center

## Other Partners:

- Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI)
- Washington State Coalition for International Education
- Washington Association for Language Teaching (WAFLT)

# What MELL Delivers

- Annual survey: *What languages are taught where in Washington schools?*
- Data | Maps | Reports and Policy briefs
- Events and workshops to enhance the teaching and learning of languages
- Website:  
<http://depts.washington.edu/mellwa/>

# Why Do Languages Matter?

## Globalizing economy

- Need to be competitive
- Need to communicate

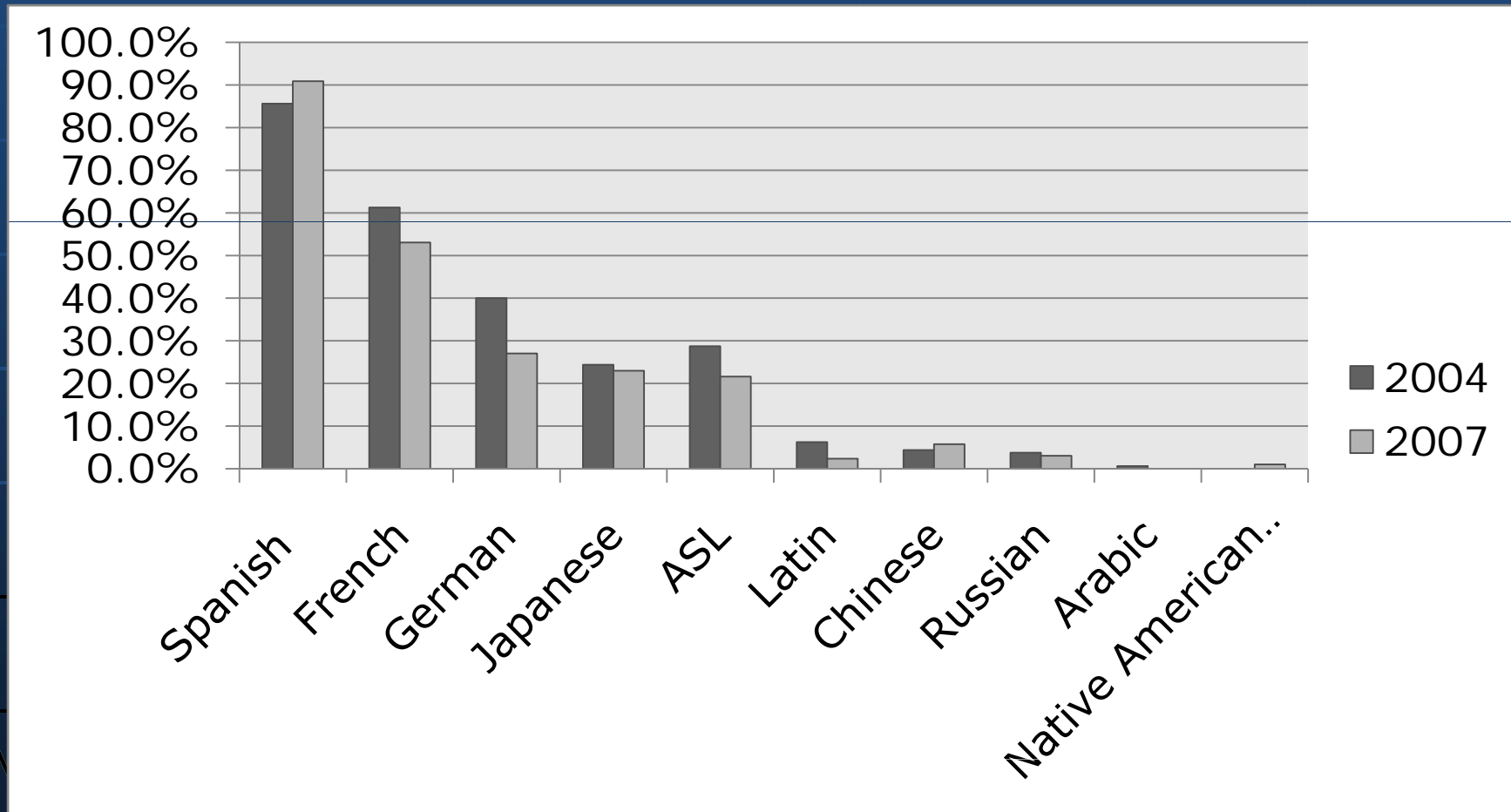
## Access to college

- Two years of world language necessary for admission to four-year colleges
- Past research shows that language offerings are stratified by race and class

# MELL Policy Brief #1

*Establishing an Understanding of  
Foreign Language Teaching  
Trends in Washington*

# MELL High School Comparison



2007: 367 (79%) of 463 Washington public high schools; 2004: 160 reported

# MELL Policy Brief #2

*Taking a Closer Look at High Schools that Don't Offer World Languages*



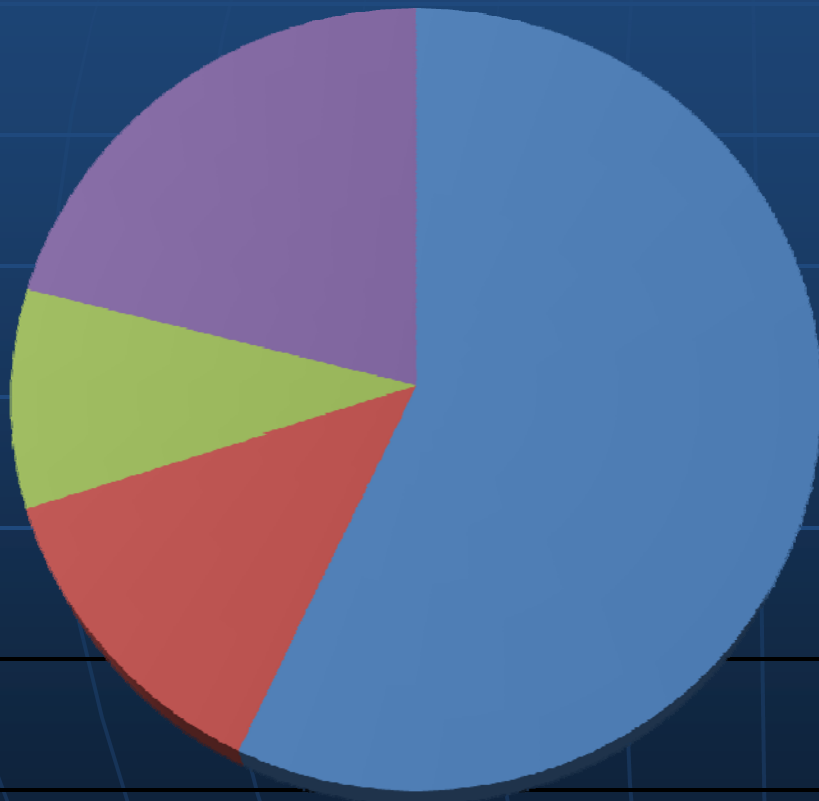
# Schools that Don't Offer Languages

- 19% (71 out of 367) of high schools in 2007 MELL Survey indicated that they don't offer languages
- 62 of these 71 are included in our follow-up phone survey
  - Of these, 5 reported that they do offer languages
  - The remaining 57 all reported that they were alternative schools

# Questions on Phone Survey

1. How do students earn two credits for college admission?
2. Is there a demand among students for world language classes?
3. Do you have plans to offer world languages in the near future?
4. What are the barriers to offering world language courses?

# How do students earn 2 credits for college admission?



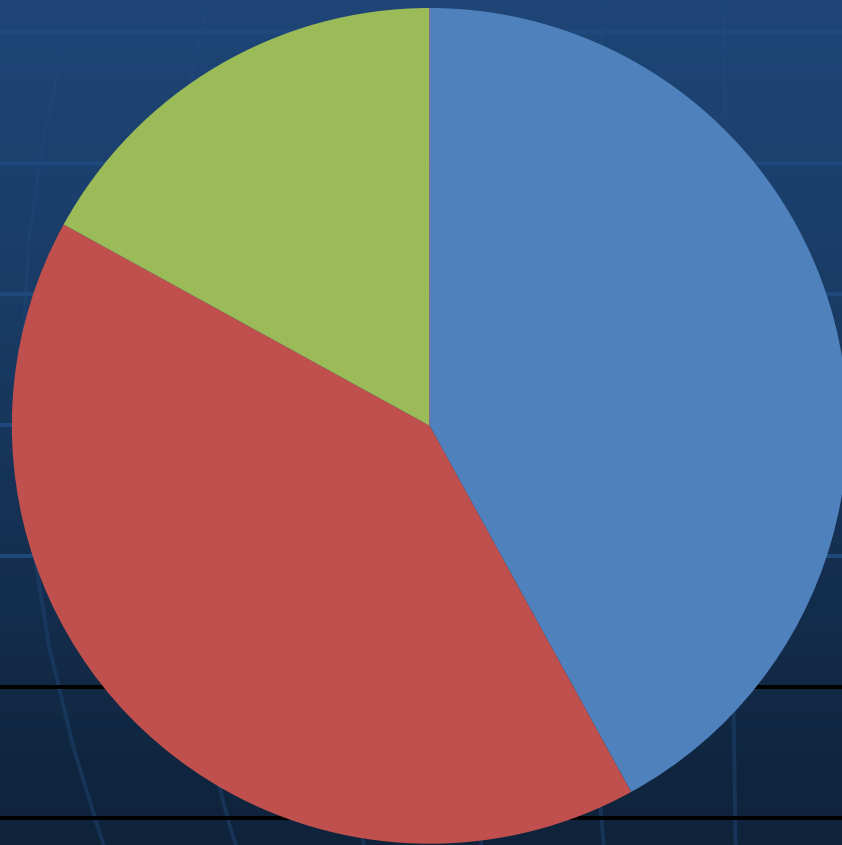
■ Traditional HS (57%)

■ Online (13%)

■ Running Start (9%)

■ Combination (21%)

# Is there a demand among students for world language classes?

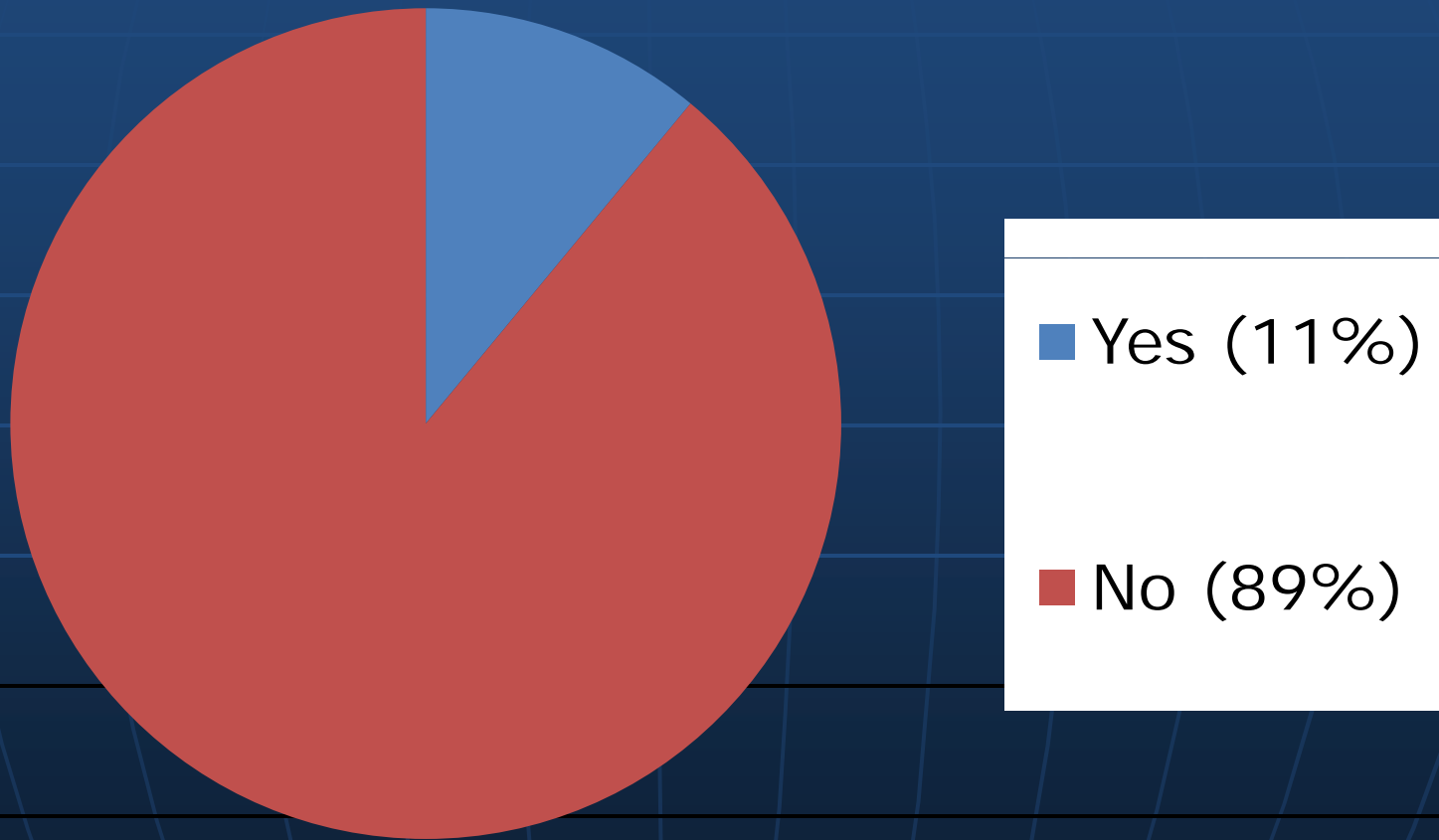


■ Yes (42%)

■ No (41%)

■ Don't Know  
(17%)

# Do you have plans to offer world languages in the near future?



# What are the barriers to offering world language courses?

- School is too small
- Lack of funds
- Students are not “college-bound”
- Focus on basic skills and dropout prevention
- Proximity to traditional school makes it unnecessary
- Students are ELL so focus is on English fluency

# MELL Policy Brief #3

*Explaining a High School's  
Likelihood of Offering World  
Languages*

# What factors predict...

- **Whether or not** a school will offer world languages?
- The **number of world languages** a school offers?
- The number of world languages a school offers for **at least two years**?
- The number of world languages a school offers for **at least four years**?



# Variables Considered

- School size
- Urbanicity
- School demographic composition
  - Race/ethnicity
  - Socioeconomic status

# What factors predict that a high school will offer **ANY** world language courses?

- School size
  - The larger the school, the more likely to offer
- Urbanicity
  - Urban fringe schools (i.e. Auburn) less likely
  - Rural schools (i.e. Chewelah) more likely
- Race/ethnicity
  - The more non-white, non-Asian students, the less likely to offer

# What factors predict the total number of languages a school offers?

- School size
  - The larger the school, the more languages it will offer
- Race/ethnicity
  - The more Latino students in a school, the fewer languages it will offer

# What factors predict how many languages a school offers for **at least two years**?

- School size
  - The larger the school, the more languages it will offer for at least two years

# What factors predict how many languages a school offers for **at least four years?**

- School size
  - The larger the school, the more languages it will offer for at least four years
- Race/ethnicity
  - The more Asian/Pacific Islander students in a school, the more languages it will offer for at least four years
- Socioeconomic status
  - The more students eligible for free or reduced lunch in a school, the fewer the number of languages it will offer for at least four years

# All factors appear to affect world language course offerings

- **School Size**
- **Urbanicity**
- **School demographic composition**
  - Race/ethnicity
  - Socioeconomic status

# MELL Policy Brief #4

*Mapping Languages Taught in  
Washington High Schools*

[View County Maps](#)

# Contact us

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***Save the Date: November 6, 2008***

***World Languages Summit at the University of Washington***