



Trends in High School Language Offerings 2010 - 2014

Overview

One of the goals of the University of Washington's Mapping and Enhancing Language Learning (MELL) project has been to report on trends in high school language offerings. From 2004 to 2009, data were collected through MELL surveys completed by Washington high schools. Since 2010, MELL has been utilizing data collected from the world languages enrollments reported in the OSPI Comprehensive Education Data and Research System (CEDARS), a longitudinal data warehouse of educational data based on standardized state course codes. CEDARS records student "enrollments" at each school by state course code. These enrollments may represent actual seat-time classes in the school or credits earned by students through online courses, Running Start courses at the community college, or competency-based credits, i.e. credits earned by students demonstrating proficiency in the language. (For more information about CEDARS, visit <http://www.k12.wa.us/CEDARS/default.aspx>.) Trends were initially reported in MELL Policy Brief #6: Trends in High School Language Offerings 2004- 2007-2009, based on MELL survey data. CEDARS data were reported in MELL Policy Brief #12: Trends in High School Language Offerings 2004-2012 and MELL Policy Brief #14: Trends in High School Language Offerings 2004-2013. This policy brief highlights 2010-2014 CEDARS data.

Impact of Competency-Based Credits

Since 2011, students in Washington State have had the opportunity to take nationally available language proficiency tests to demonstrate their ability to read, write, listen, and speak in a language other than English. They can potentially earn from 1 to 4 high school competency-based credits in a world language based on their language proficiency level. These credits are now reported in CEDARS. For more information, see: <http://www.k12.wa.us/WorldLanguages/CompetencyBasedCredits.aspx>. Note that one student who has earned 4 credits would appear as 4 enrollments in CEDARS (e.g., Vietnamese 1, Vietnamese 2, Vietnamese 3, and Vietnamese 4). Therefore, the enrollment counts by themselves do not equate to numbers of unique students as individuals.

MELL first reported on Competency-Based Credits in 2013 (Policy Brief #12 Fall, 2013: Trends in High School

Language Offerings 2004-2012). The counts should have been much higher in 2014 (based on the volume of Competency-Based Credit testing in a number of districts in the state that year), but it appears that the districts were not able to successfully update their data in the state database, CEDARS. We are working with OSPI to get the data corrected for 2015 and future years.

Because of the insufficient data, it is difficult to determine the progression of competency-based credits across all languages; however, certain languages have visible growth. Amharic has grown from 51 enrollments in 5 schools to 73 enrollments across 7 schools. Similarly, Romanian, which had 2 enrollments in 2013, had 26 enrollments in 2014. Competency-based credits have also allowed for the introduction of enrollments in languages not traditionally offered at high schools such as Chuukese, Filipino, Kinyarwanda, Lao, Marshallese, Moldavian, Oromo, and Urdu in 2014. For more information on specific national assessment data, please download the CEDARS World Language Enrollment 2014 file at http://depts.washington.edu/mellwa/Maps/2014/hs/CEDARS_World_Language_Enrollments_Spring2014.xlsx and check the tabs "Summary of Comp Credits," "Summary Comp N," and "Summary Comp L."

Trends in Languages Offered as of 2014

In 2014 we saw an increase in less commonly taught languages, such as Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese, in state enrollment data due to the fact that more school districts are awarding competency-based credits.

Table 1. Schools (Number & Percentage That Reported Language Enrollments in 2010, 2013, 2014 (ordered by 2014))

Language	2014(#)	2014(%)	2013(#)	2013(%)	2010(#)	2010(%)
Total Reporting Schools	479		502		335	
Spanish	452	94.4%	479	95.4%	316	94.3%
French	236	49.3%	252	50.2%	182	54.3%
German	122	25.5%	140	27.9%	92	27.5%
Japanese	112	23.4%	119	23.7%	96	28.7%
ASL	110	23.0%	136	27.1%	72	21.5%
Chinese	46	9.6%	68	13.6%	34	10.2%
Latin	30	6.3%	30	6.0%	20	6.0%
Russian	24	5.0%	24	4.8%	9	2.7%
Vietnamese	13	2.7%	17	3.4%	*	*
Nat.Am. Langs	12	2.5%	13	2.6%	22	6.6%
Korean	6	1.3%	12	2.4%	2	0.6%
Arabic	5	1.0%	13	2.6%	3	0.9%
Somali	5	1.0%	10	2.0%	*	*
Tagalog	*	*	8	1.6%	*	*

Note: A significant number of the Competency-Based Credit data from 2014 has not been recorded in CEDARS.



Likely due to a 4.6% decrease in the number of reporting schools from 2013 to 2014, almost all languages show a drop in the number of schools reporting enrollments. The exceptions to this are **Latin** and **Russian**, which had no change in the number of schools.

Spanish remained stable over the last 4 years representing about 95% of all reporting schools regardless of total number. **French** continued to its slight decline below 50%. After maintaining about 28% through 2013, **German** dropped by 2% in 2014. **Japanese** stabilized between 23% and 24% after a drop from 2010's 29%. **ASL**, however, had the greatest fall (4.1%) in 2014. **Chinese** also fell significantly from 13.6% to 9.6%; however this is likely related to the fact that competency-based credits in Chinese were underreported in CEDARS 2014.

Native American Languages remained stable since 2013 at around 2.5%. This is a drop from 2010 when the percentage of schools reporting was above 6.5%.

Korean was halved since 2013, from 2.4% to 1.3%. Puyallup High School no longer seems to offer Korean classes, however Mt. Tahoma High School continues to and Foss, also in Tacoma School District, has started offering Korean. Incomplete data has also probably contributed to the drop, as enrollments in Korean in 2013 were mostly for competency-based credits.

Arabic, Somali, and Vietnamese are composed of entirely competency-based credits. They each had a drop in the number of schools reporting, likely due to incomplete data, although these languages also saw a shift in which schools were awarding these credits, namely in Evergreen School District (Clark County) and Spokane School District. No conclusions can be drawn about **Tagalog** as no information was provided at the time of writing.

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Conclusion

As our data analysis continues to reveal trends in languages offered, we can examine the implications of these trends and formulate policies that will allow us as a state, and as businesses and citizens, to keep pace with the needs of our interdependent, global economy. Despite reporting issues, a trend visible in the 2014 data set is the fluctuation of credits in terms of both which languages are reporting enrollments and which schools are awarding the credits. This increased flexibility is thanks to the increase in the variety of learning methods including online classes and competency-based credits, and will hopefully lead more schools to foster student exploration of world languages.

In the next few years, we will continue to follow the CEDARS data carefully to determine whether

there is a trend in schools increasing or decreasing offerings in specific world languages. The timing is critical now because the state is implementing the new 24-credit requirement for high school graduation, including, for the first time in our state, 2 credits of World Language.