

February 2010

Dear Parents/Guardians of Incoming Sixth Grade Students,

The staff of the Bethlehem Central Middle School and I are looking forward to working with you and your child during the 2010-11 school year. It is the time of the year for us to begin planning course selection for the coming year. Most students at BCMS, except those exempted by our Committee on Special Education, begin to study a new language in sixth grade. After three years of study, most BCMS students can earn one year of high school World Language credit.

As you plan for this exciting chapter in your child's life, we offer three World Language programs for your consideration – Chinese, French, or Spanish. This initial World Language experience marks the beginning of a sequence of instruction that for most students will extend into high school. Oral and written communication skills are emphasized in addition to cultural exploration. At Bethlehem Central Middle School, all World Language classes are heterogeneously grouped.

As you and your child discuss which language would be most suitable, we suggest that you consider the following talking points:

- Each language has its own beauty and utility. French remains an important language for international communication and continues to be widely studied around the world. Spanish is the second most spoken language in the United States and it is increasingly evident in our society. Chinese is anticipated to become very important in the business world as the Chinese economy continues to grow. Competence in any of these languages may enhance educational and career opportunities in the future.
- Each language has its own challenges – and unique rewards. Although many people assume that Spanish is the least difficult to learn, in fact, it has a complicated grammar to go along with its easier pronunciation. In turn, French has a complex sound system, which adds to the richness of the spoken language. English speakers generally find the Chinese characters an additional challenge, but enjoy the simplified grammar structure and discovering the richness of the Eastern perspective and Asian history.
- All three languages, as well as Latin, are offered at the high school level, where many students begin the study of a third language. Intermediate and Advanced language courses are available to students during their junior and senior years. Students have the option of earning up to eight college credits through a partnership with the University at Albany for this advanced coursework or may take an AP level course in French or Spanish.

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We will make every attempt to honor your child's first choice of language, but ask that you rank your child's first two choices for language study should this not be possible.

Please complete and return the enclosed form to your child's 5th grade teacher no later than Wednesday, February 24th. If you have any questions regarding this program, please contact me at 439-7460 or the World Language Supervisor, Ms. Bel at 439-4921. We look forward to sharing World Language exploration with your child, and we thank you for your assistance with this important decision.

Sincerely,

Sandy Morley

Sandy Morley, Principal

**BETHLEHEM CENTRAL MIDDLE SCHOOL
2010-11 WORLD LANGUAGE SELECTION SHEET
FOR INCOMING 6TH GRADERS**

**PLEASE COMPLETE AND RETURN TO YOUR CHILD'S GRADE 5 TEACHER
NO LATER THAN FEBRUARY 24TH, 2010**

Student Name _____
(please print)

Elementary School: Clarksville _____
(please (√) one) Eagle _____
 Elsmere _____
 Glenmont _____
 Hamagrael _____
 Slingerlands _____

If you child's program includes second language instruction, which language would he/she prefer to study? Please rank as #1, #2.

_____ **CHINESE 6** _____ **FRENCH 6** _____ **SPANISH 6**

Parent / Guardian Signature

Date