



WESTWOOD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

E. W. Thurston Middle School

Aim High ♦ Work Hard ♦ Do the Right Thing ♦ Help Someone Else

Allison F. Borchers
Principal

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Dear Thurston Families:

For many Thurston students, seventh grade marks their first year of foreign language study. We hope that you will find the information below helpful as you and your child consider seventh grade language options.

Thurston offers two options starting in 7th grade: French and Spanish. In spite of the common misconception that Spanish is easier than French, it should be understood that at the Middle School, **both courses are equally challenging**.

Studies show that **students achieve best** in the language that they are motivated to choose, regardless of their reasons. For example, “I just like the sound of it” or “my grandmother speaks that language” are valid reasons.

Our French and Spanish programs are both **two-year programs** that *together* are equivalent to one year of high school foreign language study.

Our foreign language courses are **not appropriate for native speakers**, even those interested in learning to read and write in their home language. High school level courses are more appropriate for helping these students develop their literacy skills. Much of the focus of our program is on acquiring basic speaking and listening skills. We strongly advise students who already speak French or Spanish to select the other language.

If your child is on an IEP, you should consult with his or her special education teacher about whether your child is ready for foreign language study. Usually a decision about foreign language is made at an IEP team meeting (initial evaluation, annual review or reevaluation).

It is important to **look ahead toward high school** when considering your options. Introductory Spanish, Latin and Mandarin are currently offered at Westwood High School. First-year French is not currently offered. Students who wish to study French should plan to begin in grade 7.

We will make every effort to place your child in the preferred language. Click [HERE](#) to complete the online Foreign Language Selection Form. All forms should be completed by **Wednesday, February 15th**. If you have questions about the 7th grade foreign language program at Thurston, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

[Kristin McGrail](#), [Lily O'Brien](#) and [Kate O'Reilly](#), *7th Grade World Language Teachers*
[Kathy Lee](#), *Foreign Language Department Head*
[Allison Borchers](#), *Principal*