



Chinese Immersion Program at the Putnam Avenue Upper School

March 6, 2017

Beginning in the 2017-18 school year, the Putnam Avenue Upper School (PAUS) will welcome its first cohort of Chinese Immersion program students from the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. elementary school. Through an immersion model, these students have been learning content-based curriculum in both the Mandarin and English languages since JK/Kindergarten.

Our Program

Chinese Immersion will be continued at PAUS through the offering of a Chinese language course and social studies taught in Mandarin. This balanced course load of classes taught in Chinese and classes taught in English will serve to advance students' language and cultural development while promoting academic and social interactions with a mix of their peers.

<i>Core Courses Taught & Learned in Mandarin</i>	<i>Core Courses Taught & Learned in English</i>
Chinese Language (3 x week) World Geography & Ancient History (5 x week)	English Language Arts (5 x week) Math (5 x week) Science (5 x week)

As the students progress through 7th and 8th grades, they will continue to take a balance of courses in Mandarin and in English. Students from the Ni Hao (non-immersion) program at the King will have the opportunity to continue their Chinese language learning in 6th grade while students new to Cambridge or coming from another elementary school will have the option to select Chinese as their world language in 6th grade.

Understanding the Opportunities and Challenges

Offering a language immersion program in middle school means designing it to fit with the middle school philosophy and structure, which includes students having greater freedom of course selection. Immersion courses must be scheduled to complement other core and elective offerings. Continuing a language immersion program at the middle school offers students access to continued development of language skills and cultural knowledge, which can lead to bilingualism, cognitive flexibility, and positive cross-cultural attitudes. It can help to prepare students to enter advanced language courses in the studied language and/or study new languages in high school and beyond. Acquiring (or creating) bilingual texts in Chinese that align with the existing curriculum is difficult and because middle school teachers typically teach a single academic subject (e.g. English Language Arts, science), it can be challenging to find bilingual staff who are able to teach both language and other content-based curriculum. This spring, Cambridge Public Schools will be hiring an educator to teach both Chinese language and social studies and will support the purchase and creation of the necessary instructional materials. Thoughtful planning throughout this year, with support from our administrators and teachers experienced in immersion and world language programs, will help to ensure that the Chinese Immersion program continues to be strong through its expansion into the PAUS.

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