

Lake Forest District 67 Mandarin Program

When did Lake Forest School Districts 67 & 115 begin offering Mandarin language instruction?

Beginning in the 2008-09 school year, Mandarin-Chinese was initially offered to about 110 fourth through twelfth graders across five schools. The following year, over 220 students enrolled in Mandarin classes from kindergarten through twelfth grade.

When the program was established, who funded the district's exploratory trip to China?

The Chinese Department of Education and a grant from the Spirit of 67 Foundation funded the trip.

Why are we offering Mandarin language instruction?

Some economists predict that China's economy will surpass even the United States' sometime in this decade. Mastering this language will set our Lake Forest graduates apart for college admission and future career opportunities. Parents have embraced this language offering not only in the upper grades, but with an overwhelming response to the newly introduced immersion program in kindergarten and first grade. All sections are full for this offering – with a waiting list for enrollment.

What is the process for hiring Mandarin teachers and how are they compensated?

School Districts 67 and 115 accept applications for each opening. While there were over 1,000 qualified applicants for a recent opening in second grade, only six qualified candidates applied for the two Mandarin Immersion classroom positions. From that pool of six, District 67 hired one of the two needed Mandarin Immersion teachers.

To find the second Mandarin Immersion teacher, District 67 contracted with Michigan State University (MSU). MSU recruits and trains a talented, native-speaking, Illinois-certified, Mandarin teacher. In addition to MSU's contracted fee, the district pays a small housing subsidy. Total compensation for a MSU Mandarin teacher is \$50,900 -- less than the district pays for a regularly hired Mandarin teacher. (See *Mandarin Immersion - Cost Comparison* <http://worldlanguage.weebly.com/mandarin-immersion-program.html> for more details.)

What is the total additional cost of implementing the Mandarin Immersion program this next year?

Having the Mandarin Immersion program next year at District 67 will actually SAVE the school district around \$24,000 next year. Here's why:

1. The cost of the two new immersion teachers is less than the teachers they replaced, thus saving the school district about \$24,000 the first year and a little less each year into future. Specifically, each teacher hired through Michigan State University saves the school district an estimated \$12,000 per year.
2. District 67 was awarded a \$19,000 grant from the Illinois State Board of Education to purchase materials and plan the Mandarin curriculum. The district estimates this grant will sufficiently fund the new program.

How can I learn more about the Mandarin Immersion program?

Visit the District 67 website www.lf67.org under Curriculum/World Language/Mandarin Program or just click on the following link:

<http://worldlanguage.weebly.com/mandarin-immersion-program.html>
