

Becoming proficient in Chinese is made difficult with announcement that course is being dropped

DEREK FIELDHOUSE

Chinese class was unexpectedly cut last year and will be phased out after this school year. This is due to two main factors: a small amount of students wanting to learn Chinese and severe budget cuts.

"The district has a policy that a certain amount of students must be enrolled

in a class, and out of approximately 400 incoming students, only eight signed up for Chinese I," Mark Martens, assistant principal, said.

With these two factors combined, the district has decided to cut Chinese. Chinese I isn't the only class that's being impacted according to these criteria,

but there is only one Chinese class this year, a level II&III blend. They couldn't split the levels up because there were not enough students to do so.

This causes problems for students currently in Chinese class. Students were warned at the end of last year that this would likely be the last class offered in the Chinese sequence, but a few decided to continue.

"Chinese has interested me since I was young. All through middle school I had wished there was a Chinese class offered, but I had to wait until high school and now the Chinese class is being cut," Nicholas Gilmore, sophomore, said. "I decided to continue on with Chinese this year knowing that next year I'll have to find a tutor or see what I can do about a Chinese class."

The juniors in Chinese will be able to take three years of the language, but they won't have the chance to receive honors credits; a student must be in the fourth level of a language in order to do so. The sophomores will only be able to take two years and will have to choose another language to take, if they

wish to continue studying a foreign language.

All students in Chinese will attain the required language credits for the majority of colleges, however, a select few require three years or more in one language. This means the sophomores who chose Chinese might not achieve needed college language requirements, unless alternative routes.

The administration team realizes these facts and so they have offered a few ideas for current Chinese students, such as going to a tutor, taking Chinese in another school or going into

another language course. If a student currently enrolled in Chinese wishes to continue they will have to come up with their own plan.

"Classes are like a puzzle, we have to figure out what the student body would like offered for forecasting, who would teach the courses, what time the class would be and where the class could be held," Martens said.

Although Chinese is being dropped next year, it could be offered again if there are enough students who want to take it and if there are the funds to have a class.

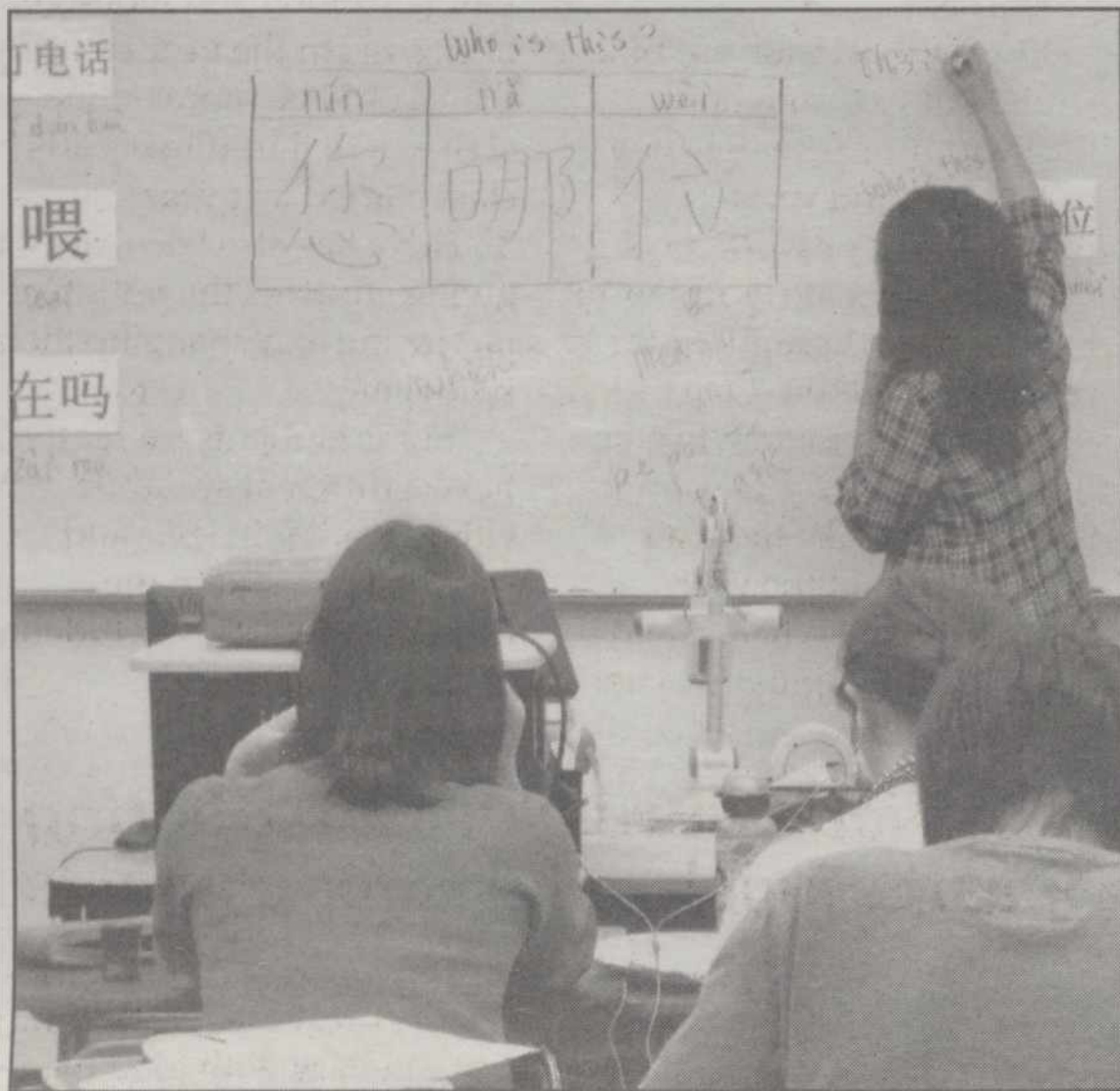


Photo by Derek Fieldhouse

During third period Chinese class, Meiling Liu, Chinese teacher, writes an example on the board. The Chinese curriculum will be dropped after this year, leaving students searching for alternative language routes.

Community Task Force created to take stand against illegal abuse of drugs and alcohol

Community Task Force

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"My role is to educate when needed and be a resource," Francis said. The CTF, in accordance with Francis, plans on having a "no adults allowed" meeting for youth where they can be educated on what happens to your body when you take certain drugs or combinations of drugs, as well as how legal implications differ between being caught with pot or heroin.

A similar "adults only" meeting will take place where parents can find out what to do if they suspect their child is using and ask any other questions they may have. Parents' cooperation will be the most important aspect to secure if the CTF hopes to be successful, according to Bailey.

"Our role only goes so far. We can't do anything about the parents who turn a blind eye to what their kids are doing, or to the parents who give their kids the alcohol or drugs in the first place," Bailey said.

CTF members are hopeful that in bringing this topic to conversation, parents and students can band together against those who are staining the community. The best way

to make a parent understand that what they are doing is not right or fair to others is to shun them, according to Francis.

"Parents need to hold other parents accountable for their actions and shun them from peer groups if they don't," Francis said. "As a parent, I can't imagine doing something to get myself shunned by the other parents."

Another element that will be incorporated into the CTF is a Teen Advisory Board. Five students have been selected from each grade, independent from school officials, who will serve as an advisory/mentorship board. They will be asked to give input on how various messages and activities will best be accepted by their peers. They will also be expected to demonstrate positive leadership skills with and amongst their peer groups.

"We're giving students tools to go out and change this," Bailey said. The school has already started putting the CTF's message on the student radar. Bailey has spoken to all fall sports teams, National Honor Society, youth football, freshman parents, ASB and PTA's at district schools.

"We have great kids, but we can't separate the kids who are using from the kids who aren't so we are covering all of our bases," Bailey said.

The CTF also paired with the West Linn Police Department to emphasize National Take Back Day on Sept. 25, an event at which people could drop off old prescription drugs at the police department.

The first goal of the CTF and its members is to bring this serious subject out into the open.

"Problems cannot be solved until someone takes ownership of them and works on fixing them. We as a community need to take ownership of the problem so that we can work towards solutions," Francis said.

The community is starting to accept that this is a problem and it is going to be dealt with, which reflects the CTF's goals, in addition to strong outreach to every member of the community. The greatest accomplishment thus far is that something has finally been said and this movement is finally in motion.

"There are kids that are going to blow it off," Bailey said. "But we're not going to stop."

"Thoroughly Modern Millie" showcases dancing, singing

ALISON FIELDHOUSE

For the first time ever, the theater department will be performing "Thoroughly Modern Millie," a musical about the worth of love compared to the worth of wealth.

"Millie" will be directed

a dance musical this fall, which was also a deciding factor for which musical they would be performing.

"The dancing has its challenges; some days I come home sore, but it's completely worth it," Patricia Palczewska, senior, said.



Photo by Alex Houston

The cast of "Thoroughly Modern Millie" rehearses the opening scene of the musical which requires the cast to learn specific dance skills. The show opens on Oct. 28 and runs until Nov. 6. Tickets can be purchased for \$7 at the Box Office.

by Jessica Murray, theater arts program director, and assistant director, Robin Bowles and features Caroline Hitesman, junior, as Millie.

"I was absolutely ecstatic about being cast as the lead," Hitesman said. "I couldn't ask for a better part to play, and I'm really looking forward to growing into my character, along with growing as a performer." She had never had a speaking role in a West Linn play prior to this part.

"Modern Millie" is also one of the few musicals done by the school that requires serious dancing capabilities on the part of the cast. A guest choreographer comes in on Mondays and Wednesdays from 7-9 p.m. to teach tap as well as other choreography, as the dance numbers require work and not all cast members have had prior dance training.

Murray wanted to perform

"We're all learning together."

Another factor was that "Millie" features many female leads. "We have a lot of strong women in the department and this musical caters to that with all of the female leads that it features," Lisa Wang, senior, said. There are only two male leads.

Because of the small cast of 26, the musical is likely to be an intimate and fun affair, according to cast members.

"This musical is a great way to start off the school year because it's high on energy, happy, and all-in-all a lighthearted show," Wang said.

"Thoroughly Modern Millie" will be showing Oct. 28 to Nov. 6 at 7 p.m. with a matinee performance for the middle schools on Nov. 3. Tickets cost \$7 and can be purchased at the box office in the music building.