1. **Rationale.** 
   1. **World Languages are defined as core by statute.**  
      Virginia statutes define “core academic subjects” as “English, Reading or Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, **Foreign Languages**, Civics and Government, Economics, Arts, History, and Geography.”  8 VAC 20-81-10.[[1]](#footnote-1) At the time the recommendation was made, Federal law (recently revised) used the same definitions.[[2]](#footnote-2) In Arlington, however, world language courses have been treated as electives or “special” courses, not “core.”. This has had consequences[[3]](#footnote-3):
      1. Students are sometimes discouraged from taking a language.
      2. In the 6th grade, total WL instruction time is equivalent to one semester, rather than a full year, and the opportunity to take a WL is not made available to every student. As a result, many students enter the 7th grade having had no language instruction for a full year, while many of their classmates have continued their learning.[[4]](#footnote-4)
   2. **Language study provides proven cognitive benefits for other core subjects.**Research has shown that bilingualism is correlated with significant cognitive advantages (e.g., better working memory and executive control). These attributes are critical in other domains of learning, including math and English. And dual-language learners close academic achievement gaps faster than native English-speakers.[[5]](#footnote-5)[[6]](#footnote-6)
   3. **Language competence is increasingly crucial to getting a job.**Federal, state and local governments have increasingly reported their difficulties in recruiting otherwise qualified individuals with adequate proficiency in a world language to perform the work that is needed, both internationally and, particularly, in accommodating the changing domestic demographics, such as the growing Spanish-speaking population. The US language industry is growing 2-3 times faster than the national economy. 93% of US mid- and large-sized companies seek employees who have skills to work with clients from different languages and cultures. Most organizations don’t have their own language learning programs, so they depend on hiring people who have received strong language instruction in schools.

1. [www.doe.virginia.gov/special\_ed/regulations/state/regs\_speced\_disability\_va.pdf](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special_ed/regulations/state/regs_speced_disability_va.pdf). See also Footnote 6 on page 4 above. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Possible implications for APS of the new federal regulations will be discussed in our future report. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. In previous years, elementary and 6th grade students who required remediation in other subjects were likely to be pulled out of their language classes for that purpose. In the current school year, that has been noticeably less frequent. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Many of the benefits identified by research have been described in previous WLAC reports to the School Board. Also, see ACTFL’s summary of relevant research findings at: <http://www.actfl.org/advocacy/what-the-research-shows> . [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Slater and Steele, “The Effect of Dual-Language Immersion on Student Achievement in the Portland Public Schools,” <http://ies.ed.gov/funding/grantsearch/details.asp?ID=1294> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. JNCL-NCLIS White Paper, “Dual Language Education Closing the Achievement Gap,” <http://www.languagepolicy.org>) [↑](#footnote-ref-6)