

## Pilot Program May be Way of the Future

(August 1, 2008) The West Allis - West Milwaukee Schools in partnership with the Mercan Chinese Language School offered a pilot class that could be one of the more important elective courses in the near future for those students in our District seeking to work in the global market. The Chinese Language Class which ran for the past 3 weeks could help some of our students be major players in the international business scene. The course sponsored by the Gifted, Creative, and Talented program offered a chance for our students to dip their feet in the Chinese Language pool and begin to learn perhaps the most up-and-coming language in the entire world.

Twelve students in the WAWM School District took advantage of this pilot program at Central High School and became familiar with Mandarin Chinese the official language of the world's most populated country and fastest growing economy. Students ranged in age from 6 to 16 and were split into two groups for the learning process. One instructor taught the younger students while the other taught the older students. Students began reading and writing the 169 Chinese characters, conversing in Chinese, and developing an understanding of Chinese customs and manners.

Dennis and Sue Krizan had their four children Katie 11, Shayna 10, Johnny 7 and Deni 6 take part in this class. The Krizans say that it was not only a great learning experience for their four children, it also taught them some words and phrases in Chinese as well. Josh Andres, a Junior this coming year at Central High School, already takes French and Spanish but says that this pilot program is well worth taking and Chinese is simply "the language of the future." Josh plans on learning more Chinese in the future.

At this point positive feedback indicates the District should explore the possibility of offering Chinese Language as part of the regular elective curriculum in the West Allis - West Milwaukee Schools. Programs like this go a long way in helping our administrators gauge interest level and feasibility of potential course offerings in our District. For more information on the WAWM Schools, please log on to [www.wawm.k12.wi.us](http://www.wawm.k12.wi.us).



Instructor Jason Lee shows students how to make Chinese Dumplings.



Josh Andres making Chinese Dumplings.