

# Granby's Global Learning Academy teaches languages, culture

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*Submitted photo. Jung Jung Su, instructor for Granby's Global Learning Academy, leads activities at a class meeting.*

GRANBY — The success of the Global Learning Academy was touted at Wednesday night's meeting of the Granby Board of Education as Director of Curriculum Diane Dugas discussed the program's past, present, and future.

Dugas said the program has taught Chinese language and culture to students in grades three through nine during the past two years.

Now, with declining enrollment, the program will expand to include first- and second-grade students and the program will also explore teaching other languages, including Italian and German and their individual cultures.

Dugas said the Global Learning Academy had 62 students in the first year. It has completed two years of a three year commitment. The academy would take place in the summer for two weeks as well as a Saturday academy in 2011. This school year, the numbers have caused the academy to be shifted from Saturdays in October to a series of two weeks with after-school programs on Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday. Dugas said this year's academy will likely be held near the end of October or early November to coincide with the end of the fall sports seasons.

"We had issues working around other people's activities," said Dugas. "We thought the after-school program would work better."

Following the conclusion of the academy, a culminating event takes place during World Language Week at the end of March.

At the event, students who took part in the academy, made presentations of dances and languages based on what they learned in the academy.

Last year, students participated in learning Chinese along with global culture. They learned Chinese dances, language, food, and more about the Asian country.

This year's academy will also teach the children Chinese culture, but the program will open up to first and second graders to help increase numbers and increase presentations in the town's schools.

"We will have culminating events for World Language Week in all schools this year, not just in the middle and high school," said Dugas.

Dugas said feedback from parents and students has been excellent. The only criticism is that the school district should consider rotating the languages and cultures being taught to keep interest in the Academy program.

"We have gotten a lot of favorable responses," said Dugas. "But we want to consider how we can keep our numbers up."

The academy is in the second year of a three year commitment from the Granby Education Foundation, which has pledged to help fund the academy for the first three years. After that, it will be a year-to-year decision, Dugas said.

The cost of the program has also decreased. Last year's program, which was held in the fall, on Saturdays, cost \$100 per student. The after school program will only cost \$50 per student. Thus far, about half the number of students have enrolled for this year.

Dugas said lessons on acting, martial arts, and arts and crafts of the Chinese culture are being worked into this year's academy.

Superintendent Alan Addley said the global culture children in Granby are experiencing is unique.

"There are students in the fifth-grade already speaking different languages in their classes," said Addley. "And our Recreation Department is offering Russian."