

February 25, 2009

Dear 8th Grade JMP Students and Parents,

As you already know last fall Portland Public Schools (PPS) received a highly coveted five-year Foreign Language Assistance Program (FLAP) grant from the US Department of Education aimed at significantly raising the Japanese language and cultural proficiency outcomes for Japanese immersion students. There is a national recognition of the critical need to graduate students with much higher levels of proficiency in foreign languages. Based on many years of feedback from students, parents and teachers, both current and former, the PPS FLAP grant focuses primarily on enhancing and expanding the course offerings and experiential learning opportunities at the middle and high school levels. In particular the changes proposed for the next four years at Grant High School require a high level of expectations and commitment from students, parents, teachers and administrators.

Please carefully review the attached document clarifying the Grant High School Japanese Immersion Studies Program (JISP) new program requirements and opportunities designed to help all students achieve a high level of Japanese language proficiency. Beyond the listed special awards and recognition, committing to this rigorous program potentially results in high level placement in Japanese language programs at the college level, transferable university credits through the AP exam, intensive in-country study opportunities, stronger academic qualifications for college entrance, and advantages in applying for jobs.

This spring at Grant High School Dr. Carl Falsgraf, the Director of the Center for Applied Second Language Studies (CASLS) at the University of Oregon, along with the Grant High School administration and JISP teachers will present in greater detail the new changes for the JISP and why these changes are critical to the success of students in our global economy.

We believe all of you choosing to continue to Grant High School in the JISP will be excited about these new program expectations and opportunities. If you have any further questions regarding the program please contact JISP teacher Kazuko Page at kpage@pps.k12.or.us.

We look forward to seeing you at Grant High School in the fall.

Sincerely,

Joseph Malone
Principal

Kim Patterson
Vice Principal

Kazuko Page
JISP Teacher

Stephen Luft
JISP Teacher