**Part A: The What**

 When I first switched to Mount Pleasant Public schools in the eighth grade I knew the amount of classes was going to be much greater. The classes that I hoped would be more diverse were the selection of language courses. This was important to me because I wanted to learn another language, but the only language that Sacred Heart offered was spanish. When I learned that Mt. Pleasant High School offered German, Spanish, and French I felt that the world had been opened to me in a way that I still can’t describe to this day. As a freshman in high school I took my first German class with Mrs. Ramereiz, and began to realize despite the importance of language the state of Michigan only requires two years of a foreign language to graduate. Due to my passion for language I decided to take a third year of German my sophomore year, and I learned the unfortunate truth that my junior year was the first year a German three class had been run at Mt.Pleasant. What are the benefits of learning another language? How do we make lawmakers understand that students need more foreign language curriculum?What I am planning to do as my senior project is to give a presentation to other Mt. Pleasant High School to encourage students to pursue a second language at the high school level and beyond. The last part of my presentation will focus on inspiring students to write their local representatives to show lawmakers that today’s foreign language curriculum is not enough. I believe if more students realized how important acquisition of a second language is more students would pursue a language.

 The Specific Aims

* To inform students of the many benefits of learning a second language.
* To inform students of resources that they may not know that are available to them, that would help them in learning a foreign language.
* To inspire a love of language, and encourage students to pursue a language in college.
* To inspire students to write their representatives to emphasis to lawmakers that foreign language curriculum is important to students.

 The long term goals for this project includes the increased enrollment of students in foreign language majors at universities. Currently, the enrollment for foreign language majors across the country has been decreasing since 1995, and many programs have been ended altogether. I feel that the increased enrollment would make sure that universities understand the importance of keeping their foreign language programs. I feel that the increased competitiveness of students due to a second language acquisition, would improve not just the universities but the economy as well. The last long term goal is to stress to lawmakers that today’s foreign language curriculum is not enough, and hopefully see an increase in foreign language requirements at the high school level.

**Part B: The Why**

 The problem that must be investigated is why we put so little emphasis on language, and not just in Michigan but across the country. How can we show universities and lawmakers that foreign language curriculum is worth the investment? How can we make students understand that just because the state doesn’t require it doesn’t mean it isn’t significant?

The things that I currently know about foreign language curriculum is that the state of Michigan initially required two years of a foreign language without a opt out. My junior year the state decided to give high school students the option to either take two years of a foreign language or two tech center classes. In talking with my German teacher Mrs. Ramereiz told me that the state in a few years will struggle to find foreign language teachers due to tougher requirements, and the continually budget cuts to universities. This year the state decided to cut $20 million from university budgets, and unfortunately the humanities department at Central Michigan University is facing the most layoffs. The budget cuts in some states has lead universities to close certain language majors/minors altogether. With the closing of many language programs students have less and less resources to learn a language.

With my project I want to inform students of the benefits of foreign language, and that they can save foreign language programs by showing the state through increased enrollment in such programs that foreign language is more valued than they think. I hope to inspire students to write letters to their state representatives, and encourage them to fund more language programs at the college and high school level. I want to show students not only that language is important, but that through writing their representatives, and increased enrollment in language programs that they can change policy.

**Part C: Preliminary Results/ Progress Report**

My passion for foreign language started when I was in the sixth grade. When I was in the sixth grade I took a Spanish class, but I found that Spanish wasn’t the language that I became fascinated by. When I went to West in the 8th grade I had to take a foreign language class where they introduced us to Spanish, French, German, and Ojibway to help us decide what language we wanted to take at the high school. After taking that class I realized that I wanted to pursue German as my foreign language credit. However, unlike many of my classmates who after two years quite I wanted to continue and ended up taking a third year of German at Mt. Pleasant my junior year. As a part of the class we got to participate in exchange with German students from the state of Mecklenburg- Vorpommern. My exchange student Lena came to America in October, and I was so excited spend time her. In June, I went to Germany and stayed there for almost a month and it was one of the most exciting times of my life. My senior year I took a German 102 class at Central, in the spring of 2017 to learn more about the language. In fact, when I attend Michigan State University I want to major in German and Economics.

` During my research I learned that the state offers a third option for students of taking one year of a technical education class, and one year of a foreign language. When looking at the enrollment of students in foreign language programs at universities I was disheartened to learn that some universities have been forced to close certain language majors altogether because of budget cuts. To me this makes my project more important because I want students to understand that if they don’t speak for these programs we risk them being lost and not just to them but future language learners. I have also proof in a Forbes article showing students that it's not just their education that is affected but the United States economy as a whole loses money due to cultural and language misunderstandings.

**Part D: Research Design and Methods**

Overall, I am very excited for this project because it is an opportunity to raise awareness about a topic that I have always been passionate about! My vision for this project is attainable, but with limited time it will require hard work, dedication, and time.

 The topic of my project is the most significant part of the project. With the topic of a second language there are many different side topics, but the importance is that every piece of information stress the importance of the acquisition of a foreign language. This research plan is a place where I can see all the ideas and intentions of my project. The anchor texts and interviews will be helpful as external references to the topic on which to base decisions and views from. The project journal that I will write demonstrate the progress I make. The persuasive essay will be extremely valuable tool to show the data, and the intentions of my project. The reflective essay will sum up everything that I have accomplished.

The way the data will be gathered is through interviews with Mrs. Davis and Frau Lein which will present students with the perspective of teachers of a foreign language. My research will also include research done by universities and think tanks.

The potential difficulties that I might face are arranging the interviews with Mrs. Davis and Frau Lein. Another potential problem I might have is if they say no, in which I would have to find a different teacher to interview. The last potential problem would be if the AP office says no to making a announcement to tell teachers to show the video. These potential difficulties will be solved through just having a backup plan in case either Mrs. Davis or Frau Lein refuse to be interviewed.

 My plan is the first week to finish the research plan and launch this project. The second week will be focused on gathering my information, and conducting my interviews. The third week will be focused on making my video presentation, and asking the office if they would be willing to send a youtube link to teachers when the video is finished.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
| May/June2017 | 1 Start of Project | 2 | 3Contact Mrs. Davis and Frau Lein | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 7 | 8Gathering research | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 |
| 14 | 15 Working on the video presentation | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25Video Presentation | 26 | 27 |

 The expected results of this project are to encourage students at MPHS to take more language courses than what is required, and possibly inspire students to pursue a language major in college. Another expected result is that students would write their state representatives to send a message to lawmakers that foreign language curriculum is important to students in the state of Michigan.