

Nov. 14, 2013

2013



**2013** ANNO DELLA CULTURA ITALIANA  
YEAR OF ITALIAN CULTURE

## Italian Language Here We Come



*Establishing a Local Task Force for the  
promotion of the Italian language in the  
Bay Area and Beyond*

Education Office  
Consulate General of Italy  
in San Francisco  
11/14/2013

Nov. 14, 2013

Dear Friends, Care Amiche e Amici:

Thank you very much for taking the time to read this document and get in touch with the data herein presented, which show a disconnect between supply and demand of Italian language courses/classes in k-12 schools in the Bay Area and Northern California.

**Statement of the Problem and background information.**

The promotion of the Italian language in the United States is a priority objective of the initiative “2013 Year of Italian Culture in the USA”, which should serve as a platform to renew interest in learning the language and to expand the offer of Italian courses from Kindergarten to college.

The Italian language is used to be identified with the heritage language of Italian immigrants. Over time the perception has changed. All over the United States, it is currently viewed by as the language of culture that allows students to connect most directly with the background in humanities of the Renaissance and Classical Age: it is therefore the first choice, together with Latin, for sophisticated learners that are engaged in arts, music, architecture, restoration, classical studies. At the same time, it is exciting for the Italian government to notice that the general public is more and more interested in Italian as a gateway to the most modern, innovative aspects of Italian life-style such as design, fashion, culinary art and to Italy’s network of SME’s operating in several markets.

A recent survey conducted by ACTFL (American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages) among a nationwide random sample of 500 students between the ages of 13-23 shows that Italian is third-most desirable language to learn, with the highest gap between the supply of Italian courses and the potential demand for courses. As the following table shows, this gap is very high also in the West of the US (4% study Italian, 32% would like to do it if they could).

Table 1: Gap between supply and demand

	Studying Italian	Would like to study Italian
North East	13% ↑	37%
South	3%	33%
Mid-West	1%	40%
West	4%	32%
<b>NATIONAL</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>35%</b>

Source: ACTFL

In terms of supply of Italian courses, the trend in California has been very unsatisfactory in the recent years, with a sharp decline in the number of Californian schools offering Italian as a choice in their World Language Curricula as of 2010, especially High Schools, where only a minimum of two years of foreign language is required for graduation. From 2010 to 2013, over

Nov. 14, 2013

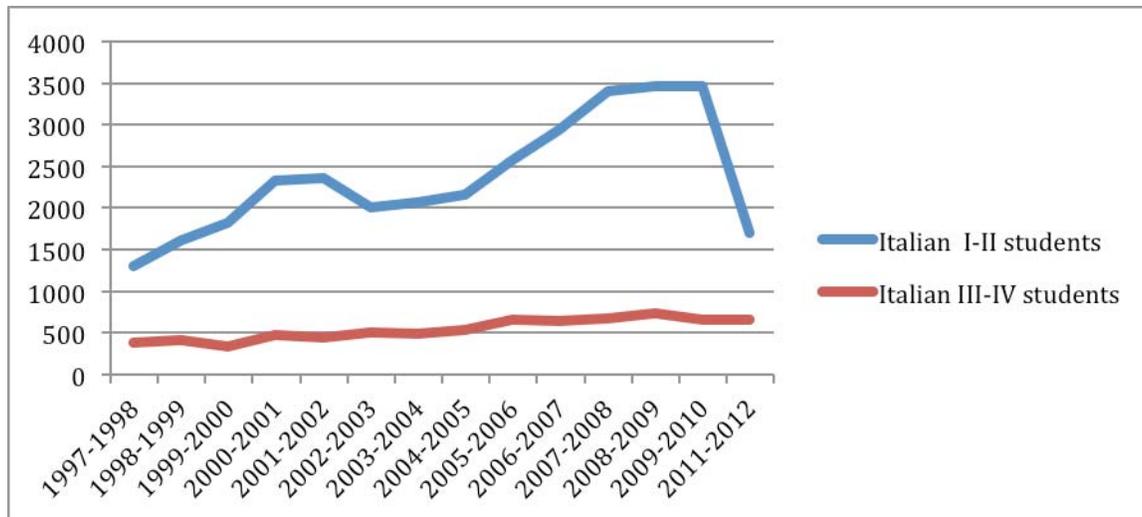
15 Italian Programs all over California have been closed down for a number of reasons, among which:

- Italian perceived as a non-strategic language.
- Lack of demand by PTAs
- Competitive advantage of Spanish and French over Italian,
- Competitive advantage of Spanish teachers in lobbying in favor of Spanish and Spanish for Native Speakers over Italian,
- Budget cuts,
- Unavailability of certified teachers,
- Preoccupation of Principals and Superintendents with reaching the Performance levels as per the NCLB framework and prioritizing core courses (math, English, Science)
- Foreign Language offerings reflecting the demography of the area where the school is located.

We have been witnessing a gradual decline in the number of Californian schools offering Italian as a choice in their World Language Curricula.

Source: CBDES – PAIF codes 2203-2202 (Italian Beginner Advanced) IN HIGH SCHOOLS –

year	Volume of High Schools	Volume of courses	Italian I-II students	Italian III-IV students	Total Volume of students
1997-1998	33	65	1301	382	1683
1998-1999	33	78	1612	409	2021
1999-2000	31	80	1820	327	2147
2000-2001	38	100	2333	469	2802
2001-2002	38	107	2368	447	2815
2002-2003	34	96	2018	502	2520
2003-2004	32	92	2072	483	2555
2004-2005	30	100	2170	527	2697
2005-2006	32	108	2576	648	3224
2006-2007	34	124	2954	642	3596
2007-2008	37	138	3405	665	4070
2008-2009	37	148	3462	731	4193
2009-2010	32	145	3468	650	4118
2011-2012	30	96	1701	649	2350



### Sustaining the AP Italian Language and Culture Program

The Advanced Placement Program® in Italian must be saved in High Schools in California, as well as Italian programs at all levels in the k-12 segment.

The Advanced Placement Program® in Italian Language and Culture is at risk of being eliminated by the College Board in school year 2015/2016.

A volume of 2,500 (AP®) Italian Exams nationwide must be produced to keep the Program alive. The hard deadline is May 2016. The AP® Italian exam is one of many (34) offered to high school students nationwide by the private Institution College Board whose mission is connecting students to college success and opportunity. <http://about.collegeboard.org/what> Students with a passing grade may earn college credit.

Currently AP language exams offered include Spanish, French, German, Latin, Japanese, Chinese. For a comprehensive list of AP® Exams offered, see <https://apstudent.collegeboard.org/apcourse>

Italian wasn't an option until 2005 after years of advocacy and lobbying by national Italian American organizations. The first AP® Italian Language and Culture exam commenced in May 2006 but was discontinued in 2009 due to fund-raising problems and low demand. Some 1,600 students took the first test in 2006 and that number that increased to nearly 2,300 students in 2009 — but the headcount failed to meet the College Board's target of 5,000 a year.

After the exam's cancellation, the Italian Government and the American community joined forces again to raise the necessary \$3 million endowment to reinstate the exam in 2010.

The AP® Italian Language and Culture exam was reinstated in the school year 2011/2012 and the College Board agreed on keeping the Exam alive at one condition: to reach and keep a minimum volume of 2,500 Exams worldwide by May 2016.

### Consequences/Threats:

If the College Board discontinues the AP® Italian Exam:

- high school students will be denied the right to study the Heritage Language of their Families.
- high schools will have to limit their AP® foreign language offer and force students of Italian to switch to another language or to interrupt their foreign language instruction altogether.

Nov. 14, 2013

- all the resources the American Communities of Italian Heritage in the US and Italian citizens had been collecting for years with their hard work and passion, and enthusiasm, will have been wasted.
- Italian Language and Culture may severely decline in the US
- more jobs in the Italian language teaching industry will be lost.

CB ID Code	School , URL, Foreign Languages covered and Number of AP Italian test takers May 2013	Number of AP test takers in 2013
50410	BURLINGAME HIGH SCHOOL – SPANISH – ITALIAN <a href="https://bhs.schoolloop.com/WorldLanguages">https://bhs.schoolloop.com/WorldLanguages</a>	31
52698	SAINT FRANCIS HIGH SCHOOL – SPANISH – CHINESE – FRENCH <a href="http://www.sfhs.com/academics/curriculum/honors-and-advanced-placement-courses/index.aspx">http://www.sfhs.com/academics/curriculum/honors-and-advanced-placement-courses/index.aspx</a>	9
50662	DE LA SALLE HIGH SCHOOL – SPANISH – ITALIAN <a href="http://www.dlshs.org/academics/departments/world-languages/index.aspx">http://www.dlshs.org/academics/departments/world-languages/index.aspx</a>	8
52695	BRANSON SCHOOL – SPANISH – ITALIAN – MANDARIN – FRENCH – LATIN <a href="http://www.branson.org/Page/102">http://www.branson.org/Page/102</a>	7
53415	SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO HIGH SCHOOL – SPANISH – FRENCH – ITALIAN – SPANISH FOR NATIVE SPEAKERS <a href="http://ssfhs.schoolloop.com/cms/page_view?d=x&amp;piid=&amp;vpid=1234750983007">http://ssfhs.schoolloop.com/cms/page_view?d=x&amp;piid=&amp;vpid=1234750983007</a>	5
50656	CARONDELET HIGH SCHOOL – FRENCH – ITALIAN – LATIN – SPANISH <a href="http://www.carondelet.net/data/files/gallery/ContentGallery/20122013_Course_Catalog.pdf">http://www.carondelet.net/data/files/gallery/ContentGallery/20122013_Course_Catalog.pdf</a>	4
53370	NOTRE DAME HIGH SCHOOL – SPANISH – FRENCH <a href="http://www.ndsj.org/s/970/RtCol.aspx?sid=970&amp;gid=1&amp;pgid=353">http://www.ndsj.org/s/970/RtCol.aspx?sid=970&amp;gid=1&amp;pgid=353</a>	4
50170	MENLO ATHERTON HIGH SCHOOL – FRENCH – SPANISH – LATIN <a href="http://www.sequoiadistrict.org/Page/639">http://www.sequoiadistrict.org/Page/639</a>	2
52970	LOWELL HIGH SCHOOL (MAGNET per Lingue straniere) Chinese, French, Hebrew, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Latin, and Spanish. <a href="http://lhs-sfusd-ca.schoolloop.com/wl">http://lhs-sfusd-ca.schoolloop.com/wl</a>	2
53033	RUTH ASAWA SCHOOL OF THE ARTS – SPANISH – CHINESE – FRENCH(?) <a href="http://sfsota.org/sotaLanguages.cfm">http://sfsota.org/sotaLanguages.cfm</a>	2
50718	CUPERTINO HIGH SCHOOL – SPANISH – FRENCH - CHINESE – JAPANESE <a href="http://www.chs.fuhd.org/cms/page_view?d=x&amp;piid=&amp;vpid=1218997437667">http://www.chs.fuhd.org/cms/page_view?d=x&amp;piid=&amp;vpid=1218997437667</a>	1
51315	ACALANES HIGH SCHOOL - SPANISH – FRENCH - CHINESE <a href="http://www.acalanes.k12.ca.us/acalanes">http://www.acalanes.k12.ca.us/acalanes</a>	1
51978	MILPITAS HIGH SCHOOL – SPANISH – CHINESE – FRENCH <a href="https://milpitashs.schoolloop.com/worldlanguages">https://milpitashs.schoolloop.com/worldlanguages</a>	1
52803	NATOMAS CHARTER SCHOOL – SPANISH – FRENCH <a href="http://pfaa.natomascharter.org/">http://pfaa.natomascharter.org/</a>	1
53080	BELLARMINE COLLEGE PREPARATORY LATIN – FRENCH – MANDARIN – SPANISH <a href="http://www.bcp.org/academics/depts-curriculum/modern-and-classical-language/index.aspx">http://www.bcp.org/academics/depts-curriculum/modern-and-classical-language/index.aspx</a>	1
53435	SAINT MARY’S HIGH SCHOOL – ITALIAN – SPANISH – AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE <a href="http://www.saintmaryshighschool.org/Academic/ForeignLanguage.htm">http://www.saintmaryshighschool.org/Academic/ForeignLanguage.htm</a>	1
	Total Northern California   AP Italian Language 2013	80

## 1. Setting the Goals of the local Observatory

**GENERAL GOALS:** Reverse the negative trend in the Italian language instruction and AP Italian language and culture classes in California's k-12 schools.

**SPECIFIC GOAL:** Increase and maintain the volume of AP Italian Language and Culture test takers up to 2500 by 2016 and beyond, nationwide.

**SHORT TERM GOALS** for the Bay Area:

- **Raise awareness on the opportunity to offer Italian language courses.**

Starting from 2013 and into the years 2014-2015, a campaign will be started to raise awareness about the need to increase the supply of Italian language courses in the Bay Area.

- **Make sure that all of the students currently enrolled in AP classes** in High Schools located in the Bay Area actually take the exam on May 15<sup>th</sup> 2014.

- **Make sure that another 20 students will register for and take the AP Italian Language and Culture exam** in May 2014 (the 20 students might possibly come from Italian expat families, temporarily living in the Bay Area)

**MEDIUM TERM GOALS** for the Bay Area

1. Increase by additional 50 units the volume of AP Italian test takers by May 2015;
2. Reach and maintain an annual volume of AP Italian test takers in the Bay Area of at least 100 per year as of May 2016.

## 2. Strategy for reaching the goals.

**In order to "Raise awareness on the opportunity to offer Italian language courses in the Bay Area"** The Consulate General of Italy in San Francisco will:

- a. Send letters to all Italian expat families (AIRE families) with children born between 1997 and 2005, who are bilingual Italian English, to encourage them to take the AP Italian Exam.
- b. Send invitations to local chapters of prominent Italian American Associations (NIAF, Sons of Italy, Knights of Columbus and the like) and other local Associations to encourage them to take affirmative action in favor of maintaining Italian Programs in k-12 schools,

Nov. 14, 2013

- c. Reach out to Superintendents of World Languages, School Principals and Administrators in School Districts where Italian programs are at risk, have already been closed, or have not even been considered in the catalog of World Language offerings, in order to understand what is needed to reinstate or create ex-novo Italian programs.

### **3. Mobilize resources to increase the Supply of Italian courses in the Bay Area**

It is hoped that the Italian-American associations, old and new, as well as associations of Americans with strong cultural and economic interests in Italy will mobilize to communicate the importance of Italian;

- Raise funds to “adopt teachers” “adopt courses”, “adopt AP Italian test takers”.
  - All AP Italian test takers in 2014 – 2015 – 2016 should be rewarded with a prize (\$ 150 each approx.)
  - All AP Italian test takers should received \$ 89 each to register for the exam.
  
- Reach out through your network to
  - parents of students taking Italian language and who could take the AP test;
  - school principals, to increase their commitment to the AP course
  - AP teachers, to inform them about best practices of the AP teaching, or teachers to motivate them to invest into AP teaching preparation.

#### **Whom to contact?**

For more information or for any question please contact:

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