

## Dr. Rikki Brons and Sioux Center Christian School Explore Language Learning

Sarah Moss

*Dordt University*, [sarah.moss@dordt.edu](mailto:sarah.moss@dordt.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcollections.dordt.edu/voice>



Part of the [Christianity Commons](#), and the [Higher Education Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Moss, Sarah (2021) "Dr. Rikki Brons and Sioux Center Christian School Explore Language Learning," *The Voice*: Vol. 66: Iss. 3, Article 17.

Available at: <https://digitalcollections.dordt.edu/voice/vol66/iss3/17>

This Feature is brought to you for free and open access by the University Publications at Dordt Digital Collections. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Voice by an authorized editor of Dordt Digital Collections. For more information, please contact [ingrid.mulder@dordt.edu](mailto:ingrid.mulder@dordt.edu).

# DR. RIKKI BRONS AND SIOUX CENTER CHRISTIAN SCHOOL EXPLORE LANGUAGE LEARNING

Dr. Rikki Brons is always looking for ways to improve her teaching. For the past few years, she has been enrolled in an Ed.D. program through Northeastern University in Boston, Massachusetts. One requirement of the program is to find and conduct research on a problem of practice within her local community and then provide recommendations regarding possible solutions. She heard that Sioux Center Christian School (SCCS) was looking for someone to conduct research on a future language studies program for elementary students.

"I was looking for a problem, and they were looking for a solution, so we partnered up," says Brons.

To start, Brons interviewed local stakeholders such as parents, teachers, and board members to learn what they were looking for in a possible language program at SCCS. She also interviewed principals and Spanish teachers at schools that were similar to SCCS.

"I asked, 'If you could do it all over again, what would you do? What has worked well, and what could be improved?'" says Brons.

She then conducted a literature review of best practices for foreign language programming at the elementary level.

"Finally, I looked at the communities at Sioux Center Christian, Sioux Center, and Sioux County in general, and considered what a long-term, sustainable program might look like," she says.

Brons put together a presentation titled "Research on Foreign Language Program Implementation at the Elementary School" and shared an implementation plan that was suitable and sustainable for SCCS. She recommends implementing a content-based program that is available to all students and directly ties into the curriculum that is already being taught.

"What I'm suggesting for Sioux Center Christian is a middle ground between having a one-hour class each day and doing a full immersion program," she says. "They could hire a language teacher who would collaborate with the content level teacher to reinforce the work already being done in the



CMB ARCHITECTS

**Since 1905, Sioux Center Christian School has sought to provide a Christ-centered, biblically-based education. About 500 students in TK through eighth grade are enrolled.**

classroom, and this could begin at the kindergarten level."

For example, when students learn about the parts of a plant in a science class, they could learn it in both English and Spanish. When sharing Bible stories, the Spanish teacher could tell the stories in Spanish as well as in English.

Josh Bowar ('05), head of school at SCCS, says that their school board has chosen to include Brons's findings in a strategic planning process that they will implement in the fall through a partnership with Center for the Advancement of Christian Education (CACE).

"Rikki has provided so much good information and has done the legwork for us, so now it's time to assess and to seek what God's will is for SCCS moving forward," he says. "Spanish is an important language in today's world, and students will find themselves using it often in their neighborhoods, in their schools, in their churches, and in the future workplaces. Offering Spanish might help SCCS equip students for future service in God's kingdom and help

them to gain a broader perspective and appreciation for God's creation."

Thanks in part to the research she conducted and presented, Brons successfully defended her Ed.D. dissertation this spring and can now be referred to as Dr. Rikki Brons.

Language is not a vacuum, says Brons; it shouldn't be simply about knowing grammar rules and memorizing vocabulary words. And after more than two years of research for SCCS, she continues to come back to the school's mission statement: "to disciple God's children by equipping them with a knowledge and understanding of Christ and his creation so that they can obediently serve God and others as they work and play."

"We want our kids to be community builders, image reflectors, and servant workers," says Brons. "And foreign language can help get us there and do it more proficiently."

SARAH MOSS ('10)