THE DAILY CLIPS

December 10, 2010

News, commentary, and opinion
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ELIZABETH CITY — Pasquotank County officials and East Carolina University appear to be nearing an agreement on the transfer of property across Road Street from Albemarle Hospital to the university for construction of a community dental clinic.

The ECU School of Dental Medicine is building clinics in under-served communities across the state in an effort to make dental services available to all residents and provide teaching opportunities for dental students.

The property currently houses Vicki Villa restaurant, which has a month-to-month lease. ECU plans to demolish the restaurant building and construct a new facility to house the clinic.

Pasquotank County Manager Randy Keaton told the Board of Commissioners at its work session Monday afternoon that the proposed building is about 10,000 square feet. Commissioners expressed some concerns about the proposed agreement, which would give the county first right of refusal to buy the property back if the facility were no longer to be used for a dental clinic. If the property were sold to another entity, ECU would pay the county the 2011 fair market value of the property.

Some commissioners suggested there should be some Consumer Price Index attached to the market value. Commissioners also said they didn't want the property to be sold to a competitor of Albemarle Hospital.

But Pasquotank Commissioner Jeff Dixon, who also serves on the Albemarle Hospital board, said the services to the community would be more valuable than the CPI. “That's an investment right there,” Dixon said of the dental services. Dixon said the hospital sees the clinic as a “win-win” for the university, community and hospital.

“The hospital is all for it,” Dixon said. “We just need to move this forward before we lose it.”

Commissioner Bill Trueblood expressed concern that eventually the facility could become a competing building with the hospital if it stopped being used as a dental clinic. But Trueblood said the clinic itself would be a great addition to the community. “It's a welcome idea,” Trueblood said.

Commissioner Bill Sterritt spoke highly of the proposed clinic. “That's going to be a great thing for this community,” Sterritt said.
The county commissioners are expected to revisit the ECU proposal after it has been voted on by the Albemarle Health Authority Board of Commissioners. Albemarle Health Chief Executive Officer Sharon Tanner said this week that the hospital is very supportive of the dental clinic.

“Actually we're the ones who first started the process,” Tanner said.

She explained that Phil Donahue of the Albemarle Hospital Foundation started working about two years ago to encourage the location of a clinic in Elizabeth City. Tanner said “a huge impact on your health is your dental health.” She mentioned that the hospital's emergency department has seen even young children who “have no teeth left in their mouth” because of dental problems.

“Good dental health will result in good overall health care,” she said. Tanner also said one of the three most common diagnoses in the emergency department for “people who come back on a recurring basis” is dental trouble.

“We treat the result of poor dental care,” Tanner said. “We don't do dental care as such.” For instance, emergency physicians treat dental abscesses. Tanner noted that abscesses if untreated can lead to death.

In addition to the dental services it will provide for people in the community, the clinic also will employ people from the community as dental hygienists, Tanner said.

Contact Reggie Ponder at The Daily Advance at (252) 335-0841.
LONDON — A new report from British scientists suggests that long-term, low-dose aspirin use may modestly reduce the risk of dying of certain cancers, though experts warn the study isn't strong enough to recommend healthy people start taking a pill that can cause bleeding and other problems.

In a new observational analysis published online Tuesday in the medical journal Lancet, Peter Rothwell of the University of Oxford and colleagues looked at eight studies that included more than 25,000 patients and cut the risk of death from certain cancers by 20 percent.

While some experts said the analysis adds to evidence of aspirin's potential to cut cancer risk, others said it falls short of changing advice to healthy people, and it failed to show the benefits apply equally to women.

Dr. Adam Asch, chief of hematology and oncology at East Carolina University's Brody School of Medicine, said the findings are too preliminary to recommend aspirin to reduce the risks from some types of cancer.

“The reason that it's perhaps too early is not that it's ultimately going to be wrong, but the full health implications of any widespread use of any medications deserves careful thought,” he said, urging caution since aspirin use can cause internal bleeding. “The larger question in terms of health policy is one that's going to require additional thought,” Asch said, adding that more study is needed to understand the broader implications of recommendations to take aspirin.

The trials mostly compared men who took a daily dose of at least 75 milligrams of aspirin for heart problems to people who took a placebo or another drug. On average, the studies lasted at least four years.

Researchers used national cancer registries to get information on participants after the studies ended, though they weren't sure how many aspirin takers continued using it or how many people in the comparison groups may have started.

The researchers said that the projected risk after two decades of dying from cancers like lung and prostate would be 20 percent lower in groups who had taken aspirin and 35 percent lower for gastrointestinal cancers like colon cancer. These odds are figured from smaller numbers — there were 326 lung cancer deaths in all, for example.
“The trend for some time has been to identify inhibitors of COX-2,” said Asch, referring to an enzyme he says has been “implicated in the development of certain types of cancer,” including colon and rectal cancers.

Only one-third of people in the analysis were women — not enough to calculate any estimates for breast cancer. There appeared to be no benefit to taking more than 75 milligrams daily — roughly the amount in a European dose of baby aspirin and a bit less than the baby aspirin dose in the U.S.

The analysis left out a high-quality experiment that tested aspirin every other day in nearly 40,000 U.S. women. No reduction in cancer risk was seen except for lung cancer deaths in that trial.

Still, Asch said the British study was comprehensive. “What's impressive is that they looked at eight trials for a total of 25,570 patients. ... That's a huge number of patients, so to find a reduction in cancer in all those studies except for one is striking. “The point is the greatest risk reduction or the real risk reduction was seen in a specific type of cancer and that's what really makes me think there is really something real and biologic to this,” he said.

Eric Jacobs, an American Cancer Society epidemiologist, called it a “major contribution” and said the study results, in addition to previous research, suggested aspirin's effects on the risk of dying from several cancers “appear likely.”

No funding was provided for the new Lancet analysis but several of the authors have been paid for work for companies that make aspirin and similar drugs. Scientists said it would take some time to digest the study results and figure out which people should take aspirin.

Others said the study wasn't strong enough for doctors to start recommending aspirin. “I definitely think we wouldn't want to make any treatment decisions based on this study,” said Dr. Raymond DuBois, a cancer prevention specialist who is provost of the University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center.

Asch agrees more study is needed first. “I don't think we have enough evidence either way at this point,” he said. “I think it's likely that we're going to wind up with recommendations for patients who are at increased risk or who are most likely to benefit. It demonstrates a real effect with a drug that is obviously as cheap and inexpensive and accessible as aspirin, and I think that's reason to be excited in this day and age.”

One concern is that the studies were designed to look at cardiovascular risks, so the groups of people being compared may differ on things that affect cancer risk, such as family history of the disease. DuBois also questioned drawing conclusions about people's cancer risk beyond the several years they were tracked.
Aspirin has long been recommended for some people with heart problems. But it can have serious side effects, like bleeding in the stomach and intestines, and poses risks in groups like the elderly who are prone to falls.

“Balancing the risks and benefits of aspirin is really important and probably something that needs to be done on an individual basis,” said Ed Yong, Cancer Research U.K.’s head of health evidence and information. He was not linked to the study.

“If anyone is considering aspirin on a regular basis, they should talk to their doctor first,” Yong said. He warned people should not think of aspirin as a guarantee against cancer and other prevention strategies like not smoking and keeping a healthy body weight were essential.

A U.S. health task force specifically recommends against aspirin for people with an average cancer risk.

Staff writer K.J. Williams contributed to this report.
Col. George C. Martin Jr., Ph.D. (Retired), 101, passed away on Monday, December 6, 2010 at his residence. The funeral service will be conducted on Saturday at 10:30 a.m. in the Wilkerson Funeral Chapel. Burial with full military honors will follow in Pinewood Memorial Park.

A native of Philadelphia, Tenn., Dr. Martin was a graduate of the University of Tennessee and received his doctorate from Ohio State University. He served as a professional educator for more than 40 years including enjoyable years at both of his alma maters before retiring from East Carolina University after 28 years of service. He was a United States Army veteran serving during World War II and continued his loyal service in the US Army Reserve for 25 additional years, retiring as Colonel in 1971.

George and his late wife, Miriam were avid bridge players for 57 years. George will be fondly remembered as unassuming, and brilliant, generous to a fault, and a man of inimitable style and wit. He was a loving husband of 67 years, and a wonderful patriarch.

In addition to his loving wife, Dr. Martin was preceded in death by his daughter, Karen Lynne Martin in 1967.

He is survived by his son, George Carlyle Martin III and wife, Renee, of Greenville; daughter, Mym M. Young and husband, Clay, of Indian Beach; grandchildren, Danielle, Hannah, George IV, Claiborne Young III, and Ken; and great-granddaughter, Catie.

The family will receive friends tonight from 5 to 7 at Wilkerson Funeral Home. Memorial contributions may be made to American Diabetes Association, 2 Hannover Sq., Raleigh, NC 27601-1764.

Perdue calls for mergers, hiring freeze

BY ROB CHRISTENSEN - Staff writer

PINEHURST--Gov. Bev Perdue proposed a sweeping reorganization of state government Thursday that includes merging state agencies, a hiring freeze for state employees, and other measures aimed at cost savings.

The governor said such steps were necessary because North Carolina faces a budget shortfall next year that analysts now project to be $3.7 billion.

"Today, I lay out in broad strokes the picture of what I believe North Carolina's state government must become as we change the very way state government works," Perdue said in remarks to a Chamber of Commerce group meeting at the Pinehurst golf resort.

She said she would propose to the legislature when it convenes in January the broadest restructuring of state agencies in decades, merging 14 high-level state functions into eight. Those included:

• Combining the Departments of Juvenile Justice, Correction, and Crime Control and Public Safety into a new Department of Public Safety.
• Absorbing the Employment Security Commission into the Department of Commerce. Perdue said she hoped the change would result in better coordination of worker training programs.
• Folding the Department of Administration into a new Department of Management and Administration that will include the Office of State Personnel, Information Technology Services and the Controller's Office. As part of the move, 100 or more computer service facilities scattered across state government will be shut down. Also a private group will be brought in to help run the computer operation.

More reorganization may be on the way.
"You have some agencies that appear not to have been touched," said Chrissy Pearson, an aide to the governor. "That won't last long."

'There will be layoffs'
The governor said the reorganization would save money by eliminating duplication, by making state government more efficient, and by reducing the work force, particularly middle management.

"Yes, there will be layoffs," Perdue told a news conference. "I'm not proud of it."

Perdue, a Democrat, conferred with the incoming Republican legislative leadership and the outgoing Democratic leaders before announcing her proposal.

Sen. Phil Berger of Eden, the incoming GOP Senate leader, reacted favorably to Perdue's plan.

GOP leader amenable
"We Republicans will be interested in working with her to effect some reorganization in state government," Berger said. "We do believe there are savings that can be had and efficiencies that can be realized by some consolidations."

House Speaker-elect Thom Tillis of Charlotte could not be reached for comment.

The proposal also got favorable marks from John Hood, president of the John Locke Foundation, a Raleigh-based conservative think tank. "Moving towards a smaller, more streamlined bureaucracy is clearly a good thing," Hood said.

"I clearly like the merging of public safety agencies into one department and the combination and merging of the Department of Administration with other administrative agencies. Presumably it will save money."

Together NC, a coalition of 115 groups working to preserve state services, said spending public dollars more efficiently "will be a key strategy to a responsible, pragmatic approach to balance the state budget."
But the group said it can't be the only approach, and urged Perdue to consider supporting the raising of additional revenues or extending the $1.3 billion in temporary taxes passed by the legislature in 2009. They are set to expire next year.

'Non-critical' jobs freeze
Perdue also plans an immediate freeze on hiring of "non-critical positions" in her Cabinet agencies. She will ask other state agencies and community colleges and universities that are not under her direct control to do the same.

The governor said examples of critical positions were probation and correctional officers.

She said she will ask the legislature in January for authority to extend the hiring freeze to all state jobs. Berger said he believed the Republican legislature would be inclined to grant her that authority.

Meanwhile, she urged reporters to ask the leaders of the other state agencies "hard questions" about whether they would voluntarily comply with the freeze.

In addition, the governor plans to send the legislature a list of 150 boards and commissions that she thinks should be reviewed and justified by the end of 2011. Under her proposal the boards and commissions would automatically be eliminated, or sunset, unless reauthorized by the legislature. (There are more than 400 boards and commissions.)

"Many of them, like the Utilities Commission or the Industrial Commission, are really critical to our state's businesses and our people," Perdue said. "But I believe some of them need to justify their reason for being."

Reducing duplication
She said that greater emphasis will be placed on reducing duplication, such as centralizing purchasing, so that bulk purchases can be made to save money.

Perdue suggested there was no need for 377 human resources positions in state government, not including 60 in the Office of State Personnel, or 703 financial positions or 149 purchasing staff.
Her administration has already put out bids for a study of a public/private partnership for bulk purchasing that the administration thinks could ultimately result in saving $30 million per year. She noted, for example, that one state agency purchased cans of tuna for $42 a case, while another agency bought the same tuna for $29 per case.

The governor said her proposals included only broad outlines and that she would provide details when she submits her budget proposal to the legislature early next year. But she said the changes "can save tens of millions of dollars immediately and trim state government rosters."

"But those steps alone won't be enough to set government straight," she said. "I'm talking at a macro level. The dramatic savings - the hundreds of millions of dollars - will be in the budget I present to the General Assembly next year. These savings will result in duplicative program elimination and cuts to middle management."

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Dance Arts Theatre presents 'The Nutcracker'
By Kim Grizzard
The Daily Reflector
Friday, December 10, 2010

For the audience, “The Nutcracker” ballet is the story of a little girl whose toy nutcracker soldier is transformed into a handsome prince who takes her on an magical journey. But for the men whose little girls twirl through these scenes, it is the ultimate father-daughter dance.

While few men will set foot on the Wright Auditorium stage this weekend in the Dance Arts Theatre's 19th production of this holiday favorite, there are dozens of dads on duty. Even though they have never so much as tried on a pair of ballet slippers, these men are determined to walk with their daughters through this experience.

“This is something these men actually look forward to,” said Dance Arts Theatre Artistic Director Sherryl Tipton. “‘The Nutcracker,’ for a lot of fathers, is a father-daughter date before the children (are old enough) to participate.”

Eddie Biggs never really had much of an interest in ballet, but when daughters Leslie and Katelyn took up dancing, he followed their lead. When they got their first roles in “The Nutcracker,” he began helping out with fundraising for the annual holiday performance, which costs more than $100,000 to produce.

If Biggs had decided to sit this one out, he would have been sitting alone. His wife, Andrea, had already begun playing a role by helping out backstage, and there were no sons at home waiting to play catch.

“My friends, most of them have boys,” Biggs said. “Even if they've got girls, they play softball. All my neighbors play Little League baseball, and I dance.”
Actually, the only steps he has to perform are ones that lead up and down the aisles of the auditorium, where he has been an usher for more than 10 years. Biggs plans to take a turn walking the aisles again this year.

“I enjoy it,” Biggs said. “Really, it's part of the holiday for me.”

When John Ogle was escorted to his seat at his first “Nutcracker” performance, his daughter, Lucy, was 2. Though she needed a boost to see over the chairs, the toddler set her sights on tiaras and tutus.

Now age 7, Lucy auditioned and became one of 105 dancers cast for this year's “Nutcracker.” For weeks, the second-grader has been attending rehearsals that last 90 minutes or more without a single complaint.

Lucy's enthusiasm inspired her father, a pediatrician, to spend part of his vacation time raising funds for “The Nutcracker,” which has generated more than $70,000 in the last decade for Children's Miracle Network.

“If she's going to make that commitment,” Ogle said, “we're going to support that, too.”

Peter Romary's daughter, Elizabeth, has been dedicated to dance since she saw Michael Flatley in “Lord of the Dance” when she was a child. When her father had a chance to meet Flatley in New York a few years ago, Elizabeth couldn't be there. She was back home rehearsing.

In the final weeks before a performance, there are no days off. Dancers like Elizabeth, 15, often practice late into the night. They only have a week to spend in Wright Auditorium, getting accustomed to the space where they will stage three performances of “The Nutcracker.” It was on one of those late rehearsals that Romary noticed older dancers leaving the auditorium and walking far from campus to get to their cars. Worried for their safety, he organized a group of fathers to attend each night's rehearsals and escort the girls to their cars.

“When we volunteer, they're all our kids,” Romary said. “We don't leave until the last girl leaves.”

Among the last dads left in the auditorium is Robert Beaman. Beaman, whose daughters, Ashley, 15, and Amber, 10, both dance in “The Nutcracker,” was helping move scenery one year when the stage manager announced that another volunteer was needed for the crew.

“I said, 'I'll help,' not knowing what the crew was,” Beaman said, laughing. “Next thing I know, every night from five, four or in the afternoon until midnight ... I work in Wright Auditorium.”
There are mostly moms backstage, helping with hair and changing costumes. Beaman may have to do heavy lifting or just hand a girl a bottle of water, but he is pleased to play a role in something that his daughters value so much.

“You cannot watch your daughter stand up there and dance and perform without being so proud,” he said.
Romary, too, said that after a few years of watching ballet, most dads give up even the pretense of being unsentimental. It seems that daughters who dance tend to twirl their dads around their little fingers.

“At the end of the year, when they graduate ... there are tears, there are hugs,” Romary said. “And that's the dads.
“We're involved in our daughters' lives; that's the most important thing in any field,” he said. “We're committed to our daughters.”

“I don't care who you are, you can be the toughest guy in the world, but when you see your little one standing up there ... it's just a wonderful thing.”
Feds: Va. Tech broke law in ’07 shooting response

By DENA POTTER
Associated Press
Published: Friday, December 10, 2010 at 7:41 a.m.

RICHMOND, Va. (AP) – Virginia Tech officials argued they did their best under the rules at the time to notify students of a gunman on the loose at the outset of the 2007 shooting rampage. Federal education officials found they broke the law.

The U.S. Department of Education issued a report Thursday confirming that the university violated the Clery Act, which requires that students and employees be notified of on-campus threats.

The report concludes that the university failed to issue a timely warning to the Blacksburg campus after student Seung-Hui Cho shot and killed two students in a dormitory early on the morning of April 16, 2007.

Virginia Tech officials did not send an e-mail to the campus community about the shootings until two hours later, about the time Cho was chaining shut the doors to a classroom building where he killed 30 more students and faculty, then himself.

The federal department first found that Tech broke the law in January, but the university had its chance to respond to the allegations.

That response was soundly rejected Thursday in a report that brought satisfaction for some victims’ family members who have repeatedly called for more accountability from school officials for their actions on the day of the shootings.

“Virginia Tech’s failure to issue timely warnings about the serious and ongoing threat deprived its students and employees of vital, time-sensitive information and denied them the opportunity to take adequate steps to provide for their own safety,” the report stated.
The university could lose some or all of the $98 million in student financial aid it receives from the federal government, and could be fined up to $55,000 for two violations – failing to issue a timely warning and not following its own emergency notification policy.

Any sanctions will be decided by a Department of Education panel and federal officials have not provided a timeline for when sanctions might be announced. Virginia Tech spokesman Larry Hincker said the school likely will appeal any sanctions. University president Charles Steger was traveling and unavailable for comment, Hincker said.

Some of the arguments in Tech’s defense centered around the definition of a “timely” warning. The university argued there was no definition of “timely” until two years after the shooting, when the DOE required schools to immediately notify people on campus upon confirmation of a dangerous situation or an immediate threat.

The university argued that the definition of “timely” is still not clear. “Today’s ruling could add even more confusion as to what constitutes a ‘timely warning’ at a time when unambiguous guidance is needed,” Hincker said. “It appears that timely warning is whatever the Department of Education decides after the fact.”

The federal report countered that since 2005, the Department of Education has stated that the determination of whether a warning is timely is based on the nature of the crime and the continuing danger to the campus.

While Thursday’s finding makes official the federal verdict for the university, it echoes some of the conclusions already made by a state commission that investigated the shootings. That panel also found that the university erred by failing to notify the campus sooner.

The state reached an $11 million settlement with many of the victims’ families. Two families have filed suit and are seeking $10 million in damages from university officials. A judge recently ruled those lawsuits could move forward.

One victim’s mother was satisfied that the federal report included actions that Virginia Tech officials took to protect themselves that morning.
Victims’ families had long wanted those details included in the report of the state commission.

“They couldn’t fine enough money for what happened that day and how it altered our lives,” said Suzanne Grimes, whose son Kevin Sterne was injured in the shootings. “It’s more about the truth of what happened. That’s what I sought for all these years.”

The university said one official advised her son to go to class anyway, while another only called to arrange for a baby sitter.

But the federal report notes a few actions on campus after word of the shootings spread but before the e-mail warning was sent: a continuing education center was locked down; an official directed that the doors to his office be locked; the university’s veterinary college was locked down; and campus trash pickup was suspended.

“If the university had provided an appropriate timely warning after the first shootings (in the dormitory), the other members of the campus community may have had enough time to take similar actions to protect themselves,” the report said.

S. Daniel Carter, director of public policy for Security On Campus, a nonprofit organization that monitors the Clery Act, said he found Virginia Tech’s response troubling.

“Our fundamental goal is not to place blame, but to make sure students are kept safer,” he said of the Act. “But their policy arguments would be very detrimental to protecting students all across the country if they were to be accepted.”

The Clery Act requires colleges and universities to report information about campus crime. To receive federal student financial aid, the schools must report crimes and security policies and provide warning of campus threats. It is named after Jeanne Ann Clery, a 19-year-old university freshman who was raped and murdered in her Lehigh University dormitory in 1986. Her parents later learned that dozens of violent crimes had been committed on her campus in the three years before her death.

The report also found:
The university’s e-mail stated only that “a shooting incident occurred” and that the community should be cautious. The report said that could have led recipients to think the shooting was accidental and that it failed to give students and employees the “information they needed for their own protection.”

The warning would have reached more students and employees and “may have saved lives” if it had been sent before the 9:05 a.m. classes began.

That Tech’s warning policy – which is required under the Clery Act – was vague and did not provide the campus with the types of events that would warrant a warning, who would deliver it or how it would be transmitted.

The university’s process for issuing a warning was complicated and not well understood even by senior officials.

The financial impact for Tech is not decided. An expert on the federal Clery Act said loss of federal aid is unlikely.

Carter said reviews based on the law are relatively rare and that the Virginia Tech review was the 35th in two decades. No school has ever lost federal funding, and the largest fine to be levied was $350,000 against Eastern Michigan University for failing to report the rape and murder of a student in a dormitory in 2006.

Associated Press Writer Steve Szkotak contributed to this report.
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Sign language No. 4 most studied foreign language
By Elizabeth Weise, USA TODAY

American Sign Language is close to surpassing German as the third-most-studied foreign language at America's colleges and universities.

Only 4,500 more students study German than study ASL, and enrollment in classes for the gesture-based language used by the deaf increased 16% since the last survey three years ago.

The top language studied in U.S. colleges in 2009 was Spanish, followed by French. Arabic saw the biggest increase, up 46%, but is still studied by just 2% of all students enrolled in language courses.

The Modern Language Association survey found that 8.6% of college students at schools that teach foreign languages take them. Enrollment in language classes is up by 6.2% since the 2006 survey.

The percentage of students who studied a foreign language was highest in 1965, says Rosemary Feal, executive director of the Modern Language Association, which conducts the triannual survey.

Students study foreign languages because of career opportunities, their heritage and globalization, says Russell Berman, a professor of German studies at Stanford University. Ultimately, he says, it's because learning a second language is "a cornerstone of a liberal arts education" that opens doors to other cultures.

An estimated 20 million Americans have measurable hearing loss, and ASL is the primary language of 250,000 to 500,000 people, says Kristen Harmon, a professor of English at Gallaudet University, the world's only liberal arts college for the deaf and hard of hearing, in Washington, D.C.

ASL has different grammar and structure than English. It appeals to students who have deaf friends or family, are interested in health care, have a preference for visual learning and even scuba dive, Harmon said through an interpreter.

Meanwhile, Arabic studies increased "well over 200%" since 1998, Feal says. "We're still seeing the interest in Arabic that came out of the geopolitical situation around 9/11."

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<th>MOST STUDIED LANGUAGES</th>
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<td><strong>Top languages taught in U.S. colleges and universities in 2009:</strong></td>
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<td>% of students taking a foreign language</td>
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• Spanish: 51%
• French: 12%
• German: 5.7%
• American Sign Language: 5.4%
• Italian: 4.8%

Source: Modern Language Association