Deutsch spoken here

German School starts 2nd year at Rippowam

By Sigrid Brandstatter
Special Correspondent

STAMFORD — “Pay attention!”

If nothing else works, Marianne Diekmann uses an English phrase that every one of her 9- to 11-year-old pupils knows all too well.

The children at the German School of Connecticut are studying a fairytale about a pirate who lived several hundred years ago. They read the tale in German.

Diekmann, a warm-hearted and experienced teacher, asks questions after each short passage to see whether her pupils understand what they have read.

The German School, serving Connecticut communities on Saturdays for nearly 30 years, moved to Westen from Stamford last year.

With 390 students divided between the Stamford and Hartford branches, GSC started its second year at Rippowam Middle School.

The smallest third-graders go to school with their parents. Some of them are too young to go on their own. After they first start to speak, they learn their first German words.

They learn that red is rot, yellow is gelb and green is gruen. They hold their daddy’s or mommy’s hand and learn what different streetlight colors mean.

Fourth-grader Timon Dauser, 9, follows the lesson in his book at the German School last week at Rippowam Middle School. The German classes are given on Saturdays.

Redistricting changes spelled out

By Wynne Trar
Staff Writer

STAMFORD — When city schools open next fall, about 400 first and second graders will move to new buildings under a plan the school board adopted Tuesday night.

But aspects of the plan also affect middle and high schools and may not kick in for a few years.

Judy Singer, the system’s director of research, outlined some changes resulting from the board’s vote.

• Once former Rogers students reach middle school age, some will remain at the new Environmental Magnet School. Others will attend Rippowam Middle School.

• Ninth graders living in the Toquam attendance area will go to Stamford High School.

• In 2016, students from the Strawberry Hill area south of Holcomb Avenue can attend neighboring Stamford High School.

Businesses, residents weigh in on Spring St.

By Elizabeth Kim
Staff Writer

STAMFORD — Saving the brunt of a slowing economy, merchants pleased with the city last night to open Spring Street to two-way traffic.

They feel the benefit of the historic district to questioning how a traffic flow change on a tiny street would invigorate the downtown.

“I am so against this,” said city Rep. Julie Simmons, whose 6th district lives longer. “It is so crucial that we must have it two ways! Is there anything else we can learn about Spring Street?”

In 2016, students from the Strawberry Hill area south of Holcomb Avenue can attend neighboring Stamford High School.

“If you make it too way, you’re going away from where the restaurants are,” he said.

Zelnisky also raised safety concerns. “People are used to coming one way,” he said. “All of a sudden there are cars coming at them.”

We don’t want FedEx trucks, he said. “This is a business,” he said. “This is a business for residents.”
German

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and — of course — how to pronounce the words in German.

Carsten Holm has his 2-year-old twins, Lauren and Nathalie, in GSC's "Humi-
group," its youngest students.

"Their nanny and their mom speak English with them, I try to speak German with them, but too little," Holm said. "It is important that the girls learn to com-
municate with their German grandparents."

Holm, originally from Berlin, works for the Manhattan-based office of SAP, the German software company.

Eric Christel, a 36-year-old American whose mother is a German tax counselor, feels the same way.

"Communication with the family in Germany should be possible," he said.

He and his wife, Emily, 6, and Molly, 4, have attended the school since 2005.

Jennifer Boll, a 14-year-old, has a 45-minute car ride to attend her GSC lessons, which start at 9:30 a.m.

Jennifer's parents bring her and her 10-year-old brother, Andrew, to school each Saturday.

"On the one hand, it makes my weekend," Jennifer said.

"On the other hand, I only need four more years, then I can complete a degree in Germany that will allow me to at-
tend university in Germany."

"I won't capitulate before."

The GSC was the first German-language school in the United States selected by Germany's State Depart-
ment to administer the official "Sprachdiplom I" and "Sprachdiplom II" examinations. These exams test German language study and are a stepping stone to the German university system.

GSC offers a two-track system — for native and non-native German speakers. In Stamford, there are about 20 classes for students ranging from the youngest to the adults.

In the four adult classes, with about 35 students, the oldest participants are more than 70 years old.

Because annual schoolfees are a maximum of $645, the school also depends on donations and volunteer work.

"The parents help serve sandwiches and bread during the breaks. The teachers are also very dedicated to their students. Although experienced, they teach at competitive salaries to deliver a high-quality education. Many of these teachers also teach at area high schools and universi-
ties," said GSC director Annette Flanigan-Barreis.

All three of her children attended the German School. Two, Henry and Isabel, are still there. Charlottle, her eldest, successfully com-
pleted her "Sprachdiplom I" and is now at Georgetown University studying German.

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