

# BUSINESS WEEK CHICAGO

## NEWS & VIEWS



## Learn Locally, Speak Globally

Language Stars is going to school. The company, which teaches foreign languages to children as young as three, has begun classes in 70 public and private schools in the Chicago area, including Brook Forest Elementary in Oak Brook and Lincoln Park Preparatory in Chicago. The 45-minute courses are taught once a week before, during, or after school and cost \$400 for the academic year. The expansion comes almost a decade after Leslie Lancry opened her first classroom in Lincoln Park. Lancry, 39, got hooked on foreign

languages when she was 12 and learned to speak French after spending four months in France visiting her pen pal. Her schools also use the total immersion method, in which instructors speak and write only in their native tongue. Today, Language Stars has eight centers, 95 teachers, and enrollment of more than 5,000 kids, and annual revenue of more than \$4 million. It's also up to five languages: Spanish, French, Italian, German, and most recently, Mandarin Chinese.

— *Oscar Raymundo*

