

Office of the Superintendent of Schools
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Rockville, Maryland

January 9, 2020

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Board of Education
From: Jack R. Smith, Superintendent of Schools
Subject: Elementary Language Immersion Programs (11-12-19-08-A)

During Board/Superintendent's Comments, Ms. Silvestre requested data regarding the system's language immersion programs:

Question A

What effect did the change to the selection policy for these programs have on enrollment? [Please provide data from the date of the policy change went into effect to present. Please also include data regarding the grandfathering of families into the programs when the change was made.]

Response

The elementary language immersion programs offer 26 or 52 seats in the lottery for students entering kindergarten. The available seats in the lottery for students entering Grades 1–5 are those seats vacated by students who withdraw from the program. Since their inception, the immersion programs considered sibling link and the student's high school cluster (catchments) in the admission process for the immersion programs.

The Board of Education amended the policy for the immersion application year in 2018–2019 to include—

- The student's high school cluster;
- Seats available for Grades 1–5 students;
- The student's older siblings who currently are enrolled in the language immersion program;
- Socioeconomic status and poverty (recently added); and
- Other factors as identified by the superintendent of schools, such as, in specific circumstances, a catchment area or attendance at a host school for immersion (recently added).

All other assignments are made by a random lottery process. The criteria for which a student is associated with provides the student additional chances in the lottery to be selected for placement.

The sibling factor plays a different role than the sibling link. Rather than a preplacement in the immersion program (sibling link), younger siblings receive an additional chance in the lottery to be invited to a program. This revised operation is called “sibling factor.” The revision also permitted a grandfather clause that allowed existing siblings in the programs for 2017–2018 to have the sibling link operation applied to their younger siblings requesting the same immersion program. In 2017–2018, only sibling link was applied. For the 2018–2019 application year, both sibling link and sibling factor were applied. The policy amendments are designed to increase access and equity in the immersion programs. The following chart presents the results of these revisions.

Immersion Application Year 2017–2018	Immersion Application Year 2018–2019
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 136 siblings applied • 136 siblings placed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 113 siblings applied • 89 students placed with sibling link • 12 students with sibling factor placed in an immersion program • 12 students with sibling factor not placed in an immersion program
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 38 out of 133 students from Title I schools placed into an immersion program • 23 Title I schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50 out of 97 students from Title I schools placed into an immersion program • 28 Title I schools
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 out of 61 students participating in pre-K or Head Start were placed in an immersion program <p>Students who participate in pre-K or Head Start meet income eligibility requirements for services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 53 out of 80 students participating in pre-K or Head Start were placed in an immersion program

Over time, it is anticipated that the sibling factor will result in additional access to the programs in future lotteries. This is due to the siblings exiting the programs.

If you have questions, please contact Dr. Maria V. Navarro, chief academic officer, at 240-740-3040.

JRS:MVN:NTH:etc

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