

Immersion Frequently Asked Questions after the Lottery

Updated 5.10.19

1. If invited to a program, what is the deadline to accept/decline a seat in a program?

For all invitations, the following timeline must be adhered:

- *Initial invitation: Families have five (5) days to accept a seat.*
- *Summer invitation: During the month of August, families have three (3) days to accept a seat.*
- *After the school year starts: Families have two (2) days to accept a seat.*

For students in Grade 2-5, the invitation must be accepted as stated above. Parents then have within two weeks to set up a time for the student to assess at the host immersion school. Attending the immersion program is contingent upon passing the assessment in Grades 2-5.

2. What does the testing entail for students in Grades 2 - 5 that are invited to a program?

Attending the immersion program is contingent upon passing the assessment in Grades 2-5. The placement test for Chinese, French, and Spanish immersion programs evaluate reading, writing, and speaking skills in the target language.

3. How long will each waitlist be maintained?

Students are invited, in sequential order, from the waitlist should a vacancy occur. Waitlists are maintained through the end of the second marking period of the upcoming school year. After that time, the waitlist is voided. Should a family wish to participate in the lottery again for the following year, another immersion interest form must be submitted.

4. Once I accept a program, what happens to my other invitations and waitlist numbers?

Upon acceptance into an immersion program, the student's name is removed from all other waitlists and invitations.

5. How are students from the waitlist invited?

Student's names are assigned a waitlist number in sequential order. The waitlist number remains the same as students' moves up the waitlist throughout this process. The next student on the waitlist is invited should a vacancy occur. Vacancies vary from year to year, by program, and by grade level, due to attrition. For Kindergarten applicants, recent trends have shown that waitlists numbers of 30 or higher will likely remain on the waitlist. For applicants in Grades 1-5, fewer seats are available. Invitations from the waitlists will begin in early June. NOTE: As families accept one invitation, all other waitlist numbers associated with the student are removed from other immersion programs.

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6. What is the eligibility after the school year starts?

Once the school year begins, the student must be active within MCPS to be offered a seat in a program.

7. Is transportation provided?

Transportation to host immersion elementary schools is provided from central stops as determined by the Department of Transportation within MCPS, with the exception of Potomac ES, in which transportation is provided only within the local attendance area.

8. What should be expected once my child starts an immersion program?

Transitioning to an immersion program for any new student can present new challenges. These new transitions can be supported by both the school staff and parents collectively. New immersion students are encouraged to stay with the program through the first nine weeks, participate actively to make new friends, and acclimate to the language and routine. Beginning on the first day of school, students will be instructed in the target language. If at any time issues arise, involve your student's teacher and/or administration to address questions regarding programming as well as social emotional support.

9. What options does a family have if the student chooses to discontinue with an immersion program?

Discontinuation in an immersion program should be a discussion that involves the school staff to address programming and transitional needs. If a family still determines that discontinuing the program is the only option, the student is expected to return to the home school's comprehensive program.

10. What steps should be followed if a family applied for Early Entrance to Kindergarten (EEK)?

Students must attend the local neighborhood elementary school's kindergarten orientation. Upon passing the assessment, parents will be given a letter within two weeks from the school administration. If invited to an immersion program, a copy of the letter must be provided along with the signed Notice of Intent.

11. What criteria is used when running the lottery?

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Depending on the program, there are approximately 26 or 52 seats available 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. Factors that may be considered when running each school’s lottery include—

- the student’s high school cluster (eligibility);
- seats available for Grades 1–5;
- the student’s older siblings* who are currently enrolled in the language immersion program
- socio-economic status and poverty; and
- other factors as identified by the superintendent of schools, such as, in specific circumstances, a catchment area.

All other assignments are made by a random lottery process

**Sibling*

- *Sibling factor (if the older child started the program in 2018-19, family will have sibling factor applied which is entering the child’s name in the lottery again)*
- *Sibling link (if the older child was in the program in 2017-2018 or earlier, and will be in program the same year the younger will join)*