Immersion Programs Lottery Process
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/curriculum/specialprograms/

1. **What immersion programs does Montgomery County Public Schools offer?**
   Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) offers three Spanish, two French, and two Chinese elementary foreign language immersion programs at seven sites in the county. The two French programs and one of the Spanish programs are total immersion. Two of the Spanish programs and both Chinese programs are partial immersion. In total immersion, all core subjects, including reading/language arts, are taught in the target language. In partial immersion, some core subjects are taught in the target language. Some immersion programs are based on geographic location and/or give preference to local school students. For more information, please visit the special programs website above, or call the Division of Consortia Choice and Application Program Services (DCCAPS) at 301-592-2040.

2. **Who can participate in the immersion lottery process? Can students entering Grades 1–5 participate in the lottery?**
   Any Montgomery County resident scheduled to enter Grades K–5 in the following school year may participate in the immersion lottery. For students entering kindergarten, approximately 26 or 52 seats are available depending on the program. For students entering Grade 1, seat availability varies year to year. Admission for Grades 2–5 is determined by both language proficiency and available space.¹

3. **Are younger siblings of students currently in the immersion program in Grades K–4 guaranteed a seat in that program?**²
   Younger siblings of students currently in the immersion program in Grades K–4 are given preference for that program on a space-available basis. If more siblings apply than there are spaces available, siblings will be selected via a random lottery.

4. **How can I participate in the lottery? Where and when can I get a form?**
   Entering kindergarten students must be enrolled (for the 2016–2017 school year) at their home elementary school prior to submitting their form. Parents/guardians must complete and submit the immersion interest form for each child interested in participating in the lottery. Parents/guardians may indicate their interest in multiple immersion programs on one form; however, parents need to investigate whether their home address is within the boundaries for each immersion program they indicate on the form. Immersion interest forms will be available February 1, 2016, at all MCPS elementary schools, DCCAPS, and the website above. The deadline for submitting the form is **April 8, 2016**. Forms must be returned to the DCCAPS office at 11721 Kemp Mill Road, Silver Spring, Maryland 20902.

5. **When are the immersion interest meetings for each of the programs?**
   Interested parents/students can attend immersion interest meetings hosted by the local school program from December 2015–March 2016. Please contact the school or visit the individual school website for dates.

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¹ The language proficiency assessment is administered after the student has been invited to the program. Admittance to an immersion program is contingent on the student’s passing the language assessment.

² Sibling link is defined as the older sibling currently attends the requested immersion program and will be attending the same immersion program the following school year.
6. **Is transportation to these programs provided?**
MCPS provides transportation from central stops for elementary school language immersion students from the areas that the programs serve. Stops may be several miles from the student’s home. Parents/guardians are responsible for arranging transportation to and from central stops. Bus trips are usually significantly longer than local school transportation and vary by program or location. It is important to consider transportation options and responsibilities. The continuation of transportation for the 2016–2017 school year for regional and countywide immersion programs is pending budget approval.

7. **What factors are considered in the lottery?**
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; and
- the student’s older siblings in Grades K–4 who currently attend the immersion program to which the child is applying.
All other assignments are made by a random lottery process.

8. **When will we be notified of lottery results for the 2016–2017 school year?**
All students who participate in the lottery process will receive notification early May 2016. For those not selected for the program, a wait list is maintained. Students are assigned in a random order to the wait list and are invited to the program when a vacancy occurs. In order to be selected from the wait list, the student must be enrolled in MCPS. If a student is invited and accepts the invitation, the student’s name will be removed from the other wait lists. The lottery is conducted in April, and the wait list is valid through the following January.

9. **What are the options for immersion students in middle school?**
Students may continue in the feeder middle school immersion program, return to the neighborhood school, and/or apply to other special programs. A Notice of Intent will be mailed to current Grade 5 immersion students to indicate which option.

10. **Is my child eligible to participate in the lottery and enter kindergarten if born after the September 1 entrance date known as Early Entrance to Kindergarten (EEK)?**
Students applying for EEK will need to pre-enroll at their local elementary school, but will not be assigned an MCPS ID number to add to the immersion interest form. The child’s immersion request form will enter the lottery process, and if invited to any immersion program, the MCPS ID number will be assigned after the student qualifies for EEK. The assessment for EEK is held at the child’s local school during kindergarten orientation. Contact the local school for specific details.

11. **What if my child has special need?**
Students with special needs that can only be addressed through an Individual Education Plan (IEP), best interest meeting, alternative placement or ESOL program, the school assignment via the immersion process may be superseded.