

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS AFTER THE IMMERSION LOTTERY

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

Vacancies in the programs occasionally happen and when they do, our teams work quickly to fill the seat(s) from the waitlist for both schools and families. Families on the waitlist should continue to think about and stay informed about their interest in the program should an invitation come at a different time of the year. For all invitations, the following timeline will be applied:

- 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, and placement in the program is conditional on passing the language assessment. Parents should contact the immersion coordinator in August to set up the schedule for the assessment.

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 evaluates the student's 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 (In January). 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 move 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.

6. Can my student be invited even if school 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 student starts an immersion program?

Transitioning to an immersion program for any new student can be an exciting opportunity and 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. The majority of the students who start the program complete the program.

9. Will my child be receiving English instruction as well?

Students in full immersion programs (French and Spanish) will be instructed in the target language 100% of the day; absent specials (art, music and PE). Students in partial immersion programs (Chinese) will be instructed in the target language in at least two content areas and the remainder will be in English. Please visit the school's website for more details by grade level.

10. How can I help my student if I don't know the language? Will translation be provided? (for example, homework assignments?)

The students will be provided with multiple ways of instruction and parents will be able to support the student as needed. School staff will be available for instruction and clarification during distance learning.

11. Are the reading target levels modified for our immersion students?

Yes, reading target levels have been modified based on historical data. By the end 3rd grade, immersion students usually read in French at the same levels as non-immersion students. Students are assessed in the target language in all areas. For state assessments, students are assessed in English. Instruction in the target language is assessed during daily assignments.

12. What assessments are given in the target language?

Instruction in the target language is assessed during daily assignments (See question #11).

13. Should I teach my student how to read in English? How will they learn to read in English?

Students who are immersed in the target language will also be immersed in the English language outside the classroom in various ways. Whether it is spoken in the home, participating in extracurriculars, students pick up the languages easily over time. Families are always encouraged to read with their student in both English and the target language; and for an immersion student, your student can also read to you.

14. Do you provide an assistant in the kindergarten class?

Each school may vary with assistant support in the immersion classrooms at each grade level.

15. Will the special education services be in the target language?

Special education services are provided in English.

16. What if my student struggles? How will their needs be met?

The school staff is committed to student academic and social transition and success. This new adventure of making new friends, meeting new teachers, learning a new language and making special memories are an important part of the social and academic experience. Should any concerns arise, first start with your teacher and as needed, include the program coordinator, counselor and administrator. Staff are available to support and instruct students to meet their needs. Should additional supports be needed, the supports are provided in English.

17. 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.

18. 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 and/or be evaluated by the local neighborhood elementary school. 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 to be placed in the program. If the student does not pass EEK, the student will not be placed in the immersion program.

19. What criteria is used when running 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;
- 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 be placed in the program)*

20. Is there an appeal process for the immersion lottery?

All students who applied to an immersion program will either be invited or given a wait list number. Interest-based admissions processes use a lottery process to assign students to programs. For information about the lottery criteria, see the FAQ above for more information. If there are unique, verifiable reasons your student should be placed in an immersion program, you may submit an appeal. School proximity, early submission of application, and/or experience with the target language are important aspects but are **not** criteria for an appeal into an immersion program.

Submit an appeal that includes reasons and any documentation here:

<https://bit.ly/immersionAPPEAL20>

Students who did not participate in the lottery but would like added to the bottom of the waitlist for the program of choice may submit an application here:
<https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/immersion>