

# Immersion Programs Lottery Process

[www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/curriculum/specialprograms/](http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/curriculum/specialprograms/)

## 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.

## 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.

## Are younger siblings of students currently in the immersion program in Grades K–4 guaranteed a seat in that program?

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.

## How can I participate in the lottery? Where and when can I get a form?

Interested Montgomery County parents/guardians whose child(ren) will be entering kindergarten through Grade 5 for the 2017-2018 school year must complete MCPS Form 306-1, Elementary Immersion Interest Form and submit it to DCCAPS for processing. Immersion interest forms will be available February 1, 2017, at all MCPS elementary schools, DCCAPS, and the website noted above. The deadline for submitting the form is May 5, 2017. Completed forms must be returned to the DCCAPS office located at 11721 Kemp Mill Road, Silver Spring, Maryland 20902 or E-scanned to [DCCAPS@mcpsmd.org](mailto:DCCAPS@mcpsmd.org). Parents/guardians may indicate their interest in multiple immersion programs on one form. Kindergarten students, as well as anyone who will be new to MCPS, must be enrolled for the 2017–2018 school year at their home elementary school prior to accepting an invitation to a program.

## When are the immersion interest meetings for each of the programs?

Interested parents/guardians and students can attend immersion interest meetings hosted by the local school program from December 2016–April 2017. Please contact the school or visit the individual school website for dates.

## Is transportation to these programs provided?

MCPS provides transportation to local (neighborhood) students only for the immersion programs at Burnt Mills and Potomac elementary schools. All other programs have central stop transportation from the areas that the program serves. 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 2017–2018 school year for regional and countywide immersion programs is pending budget approval.

## 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.

## When will we be notified of lottery results for the 2017–2018 school year?

All students who participate in the lottery process will receive notification in May 2017. 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 May, and the wait list is valid through the following January.

**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 the homes of current Grade 5 immersion students to communicate their intentions for middle school.

**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)?**

For students applying for EEK may participate in the immersion lottery. 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.

**What if my child has special needs?**

For students with special needs that can only be addressed through an Individual Education Plan (IEP), best interest meeting, alternative placement or ESOL program, consideration of staffing and services available at the immersion school will need to be considered if the child is offered a seat.

**What are the differences between immersion and ESOL programs?**

The immersion program is an optional program for students whose first language is English and who may be interested in learning another language. It is a K–8 program at seven (7) different elementary schools and four (4) middle school sites throughout the county hosting one of the immersion programs. Instruction is in the target language and the program varies as students are taught for at least two content areas in a partial program or four content areas in a full program. Students are invited through a lottery process. Transportation varies for each program.

English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) is designed for students whose first language is one other than English and who demonstrate a need to develop English language proficiency. Evaluation for ESOL may occur at the school or upon enrollment at the international admissions office. ESOL instruction occurs for a portion of the instructional day and is in addition to the student's regular instructional program. The students' current English acquisition level will determine the instructional program at the school. Most elementary schools offer ESOL programs and therefore students stay at their home school for this program. The program is generally available to students for as long as they need in Grades K–12.