

Chinese Immersion Program

Language immersion is a method of teaching a second language in which the learners' second language (L2) is the medium of classroom instruction. Through this method, learners study school subjects, such as math and science in the L2. The main purpose of this method is to foster bilingualism, in other words, to develop learners' communicative competence or language proficiency in their L2 in addition to their first or native language (L1). Research shows that students gain additional cognitive, academic and employment benefits.

Class time: The College Gardens Chinese Immersion Program is a *partial immersion* program. In partial immersion, about half of the class time is spent learning subject matter in the target language. The goals are to become functionally proficient in the second language, to master subject content taught in the foreign languages, and to acquire an understanding of and appreciation for other cultures, but to a lesser extent than *full immersion*.

Students: Selection for the program is based on a lottery system for students in kindergarten and Grade 1 if requests exceed available program capacity. Admission for all other grades is determined by lottery, available space and language proficiency.

Transportation: Transportation into the CGES Countywide Immersion program is available to students throughout the county

Curriculum: All MCPS immersion programs use the MCPS Elementary Curriculum, which includes translated resources developed by the curriculum office. The CGES immersion teachers use the PYP lessons that are developed by the teachers at CGES as a part of their PYP requirement.

Materials and Resources: All immersion schools should have adequate materials (books, online resources, posters) available to students and teachers in the target language. When entering an immersion school, the target language should be obvious and visible as evidenced by the signage and print rich environment.

Staffing: The CGES partial immersion program requires at least three teachers that are bilingual and biliterate in Mandarin. Grades (K-1), (2-3), and (4-5). Ideally, immersion schools should also have additional certified professional and support staff to enhance the overall program. These supports could include: immersion lead teacher, interventions, enrichment, specials, and paraeducator support.

Environment: In an immersion school, teachers should expect students to speak the target language to one another and other staff. To encourage bilingualism, the school should seek multiple opportunities to use the target language. Opportunities include:

- Arrival procedures
- Morning announcements
- Assemblies held in Mandarin
- Field trips related to Chinese culture
- Visiting guests/ cultural presentations in Mandarin