

## Program Application Process

- Any student eligible for Kindergarten in the 2025-2026 school year may apply. Applications will be accepted beginning on April 14, 2025.
- Applications will be available at all ACPS elementary schools and also can be printed from the BOE website at <http://www.acpsmd.org/Domain/63>
- The deadline for applications will be Friday, May 16, 2025 and can be turned into your child's home school or sent to West Side Elementary, 425 Paca Street, Cumberland, MD 21502.
- If the number of applicants exceeds 20, a lottery will be used to determine student admission.
- A wait list will be established if necessary. Families will be notified of admission or waitlist by email on May 30th.



Chinese New Year Parade, Washington, DC



Information about the Program can be found on the Allegany County Public Schools website at

<https://www.acpsmd.org/domain/641>

Information can also be obtained by calling West Side Elementary at

301-724-0340.

## Chinese Partial Immersion Kindergarten Program



West Side Elementary School is the proud host of a Chinese partial-immersion program. The program begins in kindergarten. Students enrolled in the program will continue at West Side through grade 5 and have the opportunity to develop communicative and academic proficiency in Mandarin Chinese and in English. The program continues into Braddock Middle and Allegany High School.

Registration is open to all Allegany County students entering kindergarten. Please be aware that ACPS will not provide transportation for students who reside outside of the West Side school district.

## Benefits of Bilingual Education

- Bilingual learning enhances elementary students' intellectual development , basic skills and performance along with improving a child's understanding of his/her native language. (Center for Applied Linguistics)
- Studying a second language has positive effects on memory, listening, and critical thinking skills. (Hakuta, 1986)
- Children who are exposed to both foreign language and culture in elementary school better internalize an understanding and acceptance of cultural differences and diversity. (Bamford & Mizokawa, 1991)
- Students that study a second language in elementary school have improved overall school performance and superior problem – solving skills. (Bamford & Mizokawa, 1991)
- The human brain is more open to linguistic development between birth and preadolescence, and children who learn a language before adolescence are more likely to develop native-like pronunciation. (Strozer, 1994)



## Why Mandarin Chinese?

- The U.S. Government classifies Mandarin Chinese as a Category IV language—one of the most difficult languages for native English speakers to learn. It is best learned in elementary School.
- Researchers suggest the more difficult the language to learn, the greater the overall cognitive benefits.
- Research shows that attaining fluency in a second language , particularly more difficult languages, makes learning a third or more languages much easier.
- The four most widely spoken languages in the world:
  - Chinese: 2 billion+ (Mandarin Chinese: 1 billion+)
  - English: 514 million
  - Hindustani: 496 million
  - Spanish: 425 million



## Bilingual Education at West Side Elementary

- The 14th Kindergarten cohort will begin in 2025-2026 and continue through grade 5 in the Mandarin class.
- Immersion language learning will be carefully structured to ensure that instruction quickly becomes comprehensible. We will be instructing 50% in English and 50% in Mandarin Chinese.
- STEM content will be instructed in Mandarin Chinese (Science, Technology, Health, Math)
- There will be a strong technology connection. The classroom will be a high tech atmosphere with a SMART Table, SMARTboard, individual student iPads, etc.
- The teacher will be a native speaking, fully credentialed early childhood/ elementary teacher.
- The classroom will have hands-on learning stations designed to reinforce Mandarin language learning.
- Enrolled students will also succeed academically in all subject areas at levels comparable to those they would have reached if they had only been schooled in English.

