

# ACPS CHINESE PARTIAL IMMERSION PROGRAM

## What You Should Know

- The program began in 2011 through a Race to the Top grant from the U.S. Department of Education through the World Language Pipeline Project in conjunction with the Maryland State Department of Education.
- The program is currently part of the ACPS instructional operating budget.
- Any Allegany County student eligible for kindergarten may apply for the program; however, transportation is not provided for students who reside outside of the West Side attendance area.
- Participating students are selected through a lottery process.
- The curriculum for the program completely mirrors the curriculum of all ACPS students with the only distinction being the natural use of the Chinese language.
- The Confucius Institute of UMD, often referred to as **Hanban**, partners with Maryland schools offering a Chinese Immersion program.
- Hanban** offers ACPS optional resources and materials related to arts, culture, education and professional development.
- There are currently over 140 students enrolled in the program from grades K-6 at both West Side and Braddock.
- All classroom teachers in the Chinese Immersion Program are hired by ACPS through the established hiring process.
- There are 3 additional teachers from **Hanban** who serve as guest teachers and are vetted through the visa process. These teachers submit resumes, are interviewed, and selected by ACPS personnel.
- Hanban** guest teachers serve as co-teachers in K-12 classrooms and are with ACPS anywhere from 1-3 years. Guest teachers participate in all ACPS professional learning opportunities.
- ACPS pays the room, board, visa, insurance, and transportation for two guest teachers. **Hanban** pays the salaries for all and the room and board for one.
- For several years, West Side students have participated in an international language competition through the University of Maryland, and they win or place every year.
- Enrolled students succeed academically at levels comparable to their peers who receive instruction in English.
- Bilingual learning enhances elementary students' intellectual development, basic skills, and performance along with improving a child's understanding of his or her native language.
- By high school, students enrolled in the program will have the opportunity to earn Advanced Placement and college credits.
- Students who graduate from this program have the opportunity to earn the equivalent of a college minor in Chinese or related area.
- By graduation, students in the program have the opportunity to earn the Maryland Seal of **Biliteracy**.
- Students enrolled in the Chinese Immersion Program will develop global competence with marketable 21<sup>st</sup> century skills for post-secondary and career success.

## WHY MANDARIN?

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.

Researcher suggest the more difficult the language to learn, the greater the overall cognitive benefits.

The most widely spoken language in the world is Mandarin Chinese (1.1 billion).

## ABOUT THE PROGRAM

The 2<sup>nd</sup> kindergarten cohort began in the 2018-2019 school year.

Immersion language learning is carefully structured to ensure that instruction quickly becomes comprehensible. Instruction is 50% in Mandarin and 50% in English.

STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) content is instructed in Mandarin at the elementary level. Language and literacy is taught in Mandarin at the middle school level, and students can potentially earn 3 high school world language credits.

Classrooms are high-tech atmospheres with SMART technology and individual iPads or laptops.

Classroom teachers are native speakers of Mandarin and are certified through the Maryland State Department of Education.

The Chinese Immersion Program follows the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards and the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Standards.



*Pictured is the first cohort of the program at The Great Wall of China.*