

BOARD OF EDUCATION OF HARFORD COUNTY

INFORMATIONAL BOARD REPORT

THE STATUS OF TIES WITHIN HCPS AND AT EMMORTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL:

DoDEA GRANT #HE 1254-23-1-5001

Background Information:

Harford County Public Schools is deeply committed to meeting the needs of all students. Monitoring and measuring student performance and achievement as they relate to the Maryland College and Career Readiness Standards, MCAP, Graduation Rate, attainment of the Seal of Biliteracy, and North Star attributes are at the forefront of our efforts. This includes providing students with engaging school experiences that help to prepare them for their role as a global citizen.

HCPS applied for and was awarded a DoDEA WLARP (*World Language Advancement and Readiness Program*) grant. This is a \$500,000.00 grant awarded for a 5-year period. The first year is a required planning year. The criteria for site selection included the identification of schools that have a minimum of 10% military-connected population of students.

HCPS will implement an early language Spanish immersion program, TIES (*Teaching through Immersion in Elementary School*), to be housed at Emmorton Elementary School in Bel Air, Maryland using a phased approach. Of our military-connected schools, Emmorton has the most diverse native language population within the district. Once students have acquired the skill of an additional language, it must be developed rigorously. The goals of TIES/early language learning include (1) increase the knowledge, skills, and/or interest of military-connected students in Spanish, and (2) to build a pipeline of students who will work towards earning the Seal of Biliteracy which will enhance choices and opportunities for post-secondary studies and/or work.

Students will continue to be encouraged to work towards the Seal of Biliteracy throughout their time in HCPS, through advanced assessments and application of the target language, which will enhance their choices for post-secondary opportunities.

The early language program, TIES, that HCPS will be implementing will utilize the current HCPS Mathematics curriculum, Spanish version, and all resources which are aligned to the identified state standards. The current HCPS world language FLEX/Discovery curriculum, based on the *ACTFL World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages*, will serve as the foundation of Spanish language instruction. Grade level appropriate supplemental resources include: HMH *¡Arriba la Lectura!*[™], decodable readers, interactive phonics practice, and sample small group instructional lessons and interventions.

Discussion:

The Teaching through Immersion in Elementary Schools Program (TIES) aims to increase the access and use of world language instruction to support academic success, achievement, and post-graduation opportunities for students in Harford County Public Schools (HCPS).

In addition to closing the achievement gap for all student groups, there are many reasons for all students to develop at least two languages to a high level of proficiency. The most compelling reasons involve the ongoing cognitive processes that occur in the bilingual/multilingual brain. In recent years, research has indicated that the advantages of the bilingual/multilingual brain include the outperformance of the monolingual brain in the following areas: creativity, problem solving, divergent thinking, mental flexibility, metalinguistic awareness, visual-spatial skills, more efficient cognitive/sensory processing, executive functioning, working memory, attention to detail, conflict management, and ability to ignore distractions (Thomas and Collier, 2017).

Early language programs stimulate systemic, and district change because administrative, curricular, and teaching practices must be examined and reflected upon to fully understand and embrace how the students' languages and cultures add to the overall school experience, leading to innovative and creative ways of engaging and addressing the needs of all students in the school system. In the educational setting, the two most important outcomes of dual language programs are higher student cognitive development and stronger student engagement with instruction.

In addition to the enhancement of educational experiences, real-world implications for speaking other languages are noted by employers. Studies show that employers value potential employees with additional language and cultural skills beyond English that prove to enhance business, government, military, and intelligence settings.

Superintendent's Recommendation:

The Superintendent of schools recommends that the Board of Education accept this informational presentation of the DoDEA grant-funded Spanish immersion program at Emmorton Elementary School, TIES.