



ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

LANGUAGE IMMERSION PROGRAMS

AP 6144

Effective Date: December 16, 2024

- I. **PURPOSE:** To identify the steps for entrance into the selection-based Immersion programs, steps to be taken when students enrolled in the programs are experiencing difficulty in school, and for exiting an Immersion program.
- II. **POLICY:** The Prince George's County Board of Education (Board) firmly believes that the academic achievement of all students is paramount. Student academic achievement is supported by providing equitable access to a high-quality education and resources to guarantee that every child graduating from Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) is college and career ready (Board Policy 0118).
- III. **BACKGROUND:** The Board is dedicated to supporting programs of choice that offer a unique or specialized curriculum or instructional approach. These programs are designed to meet the needs of a diverse student population and to accommodate parental preference, where possible. Entry into specialty programs is generally managed through a computerized, random selection process called a lottery. Specialty programs provide options in addition to the broad spectrum of programs in each comprehensive school. They are designed to address the needs and interests of students and parents. These programs allow for exploration and development of interests and needs while following state and school system mandates.
- IV. **DEFINITIONS:**
 - A. *Entry grade* – The entry grade is kindergarten which is when the program instruction begins–Students must be five years old by September 1 to qualify for entrance to kindergarten.
 - B. *Open access* – Whole school programs which are located in neighborhoods/schools where every child in the boundary is automatically eligible to participate in the specialty program.

- C. *Out of boundary* – A school that resides out of the school system’s defined boundaries for a residential address.
- D. *Reciprocity* – Entrance granted upon a space available basis and language proficiency testing when a student first enters PGCPSS from outside the county after attending four consecutive quarters and/or two consecutive semesters at a public Immersion Program.
- E. *Selection-based specialty programs* – Students must submit an application, audition, and/or meet certain selection criteria (i.e., lottery, testing). These selection-based programs can encompass the whole school or be a program within a school.
- F. *Student Intervention Team (SIT)* –a school-based, problem-solving team comprised of faculty members (usually general educators) who meet to help teachers identify and implement appropriate interventions for students who need support so they are ready and able to learn, as well as students who are in need of academic acceleration. Most often, the team will discuss a student who is having academic or behavioral difficulties. Challenges with attendance/tardiness of emotional/health issues may also be addressed.
- G. *Student Support Team (SST)* –a multidisciplinary team with expertise in teaching and learning, problem solving, and interventions. It is used when strategies and/or interventions for a student have proven unsuccessful. Additionally, the collaborative problem-solving process followed by the SST promotes shared ownership for student, school, and system success and helps to reduce the disproportionate identification of certain student groups for special education services.
- H. *Transfers* – A permission to attend a school that is not within the defined boundaries for a residential address.

V. **PROCEDURES:** All Language Immersion programs follow general procedures pertaining to promotion, retention, and acceleration of students following Administrative Procedure 5123.2.

A. Selection and Enrollment

1. Entry into kindergarten of a selection-based Language Immersion Program is managed by the lottery. There is no early entry and no transfers into the program at kindergarten.
2. Preferential entry consideration will be given to applicants for kindergarten who have a sibling continuing in the same program and who make a timely application for entry as a sibling. This preferential consideration is only available at

kindergarten (the entry grade) for applicants meeting the age and other entry requirements and does not guarantee placement (See Administrative Procedure 6148 for details).

3. Entry into the Language Immersion Program at Grade 1 and above requires students to have a demonstrated skill level (speaking, listening, reading, and writing) in the immersion language and also in English to be considered for entry. Admissions to a Language Immersion Program at a grade level other than kindergarten must follow Administrative Procedure 6148. Testing will be conducted by the Immersion Programs Office in June and/or July for the upcoming school year. Placements will be made until September 30.
4. Reciprocity from like Immersion Programs outside of PGCPSS will be determined by the Office of Pupil Accounting and School Boundaries. If warranted, reciprocity will be offered with placement decisions based on successful proficiency testing by the Immersion Programs Office and space availability by the Office of Pupil Accounting and School Boundaries.

In order to request reciprocity, the parent/guardian must submit a written request to the Office of Pupil Accounting and School Boundaries within thirty (30) days of establishing residence in Prince George's County. The written request must include the following:

- a. Current written program description from the school that the student previously attended;
 - b. Most recent report card and/or transcript for the student;
 - c. Contact information and website for the school previously attended; and
 - d. Documentation validating the recent establishment of a Prince George's County residence.
5. The decision to offer reciprocity will be made on a case-by-case basis jointly by the Office of Pupil Accounting and School Boundaries and the Division of Academics considering pending requests and relevant factors. There is no assurance that reciprocity will be made available.
 6. Early Entrance procedures do not apply to specialty programs, including Language Immersion (see Administrative Procedure 5111.1).

B. Continuous Enrollment:

1. Attendance

- a. Refer to Administrative Procedure 5113, Student Attendance, Absence and Truancy regarding attending policies.
- b. All students admitted to a Language Immersion Program and currently enrolled at the end of the year will automatically continue in the school provided they meet the enrollment criteria, unless they are officially withdrawn or transferred to another school. If a student is absent for ten (10) consecutive days due to an unlawful absence, they will be automatically withdrawn and may not be re-enrolled in the Language Immersion Program.
- c. Whenever it is determined that a student's attendance requires intervention, written notification of that determination will be provided to the parents/guardians.
- d. School administrators, Academic Deans, and teachers may request a review of a student's attendance in PGCPs Student information system under the following circumstances:

A student incurs eight (8) unlawful absences from a class in a quarter, fifteen (15) unlawful days in a semester or twenty (20) or more unlawful absences from a school in a year.

- e. Attendance interventions initiated by administrators, Academic Deans and/or school counselors will include a parent conference(s) and strategic intervention(s) provided by the Student Intervention Team (SIT).

2. Attendance Difficulties

- a. Refer to AP 5113, Student Attendance, Absence, and Truancy, as well as the specific Specialty Program contract regarding attendance policies.
- b. Additionally, the program coordinator should provide email notification to the parent/legal guardian regarding consecutive or chronic absences if the student has three (3) or more unlawful absences in a quarter. School administrators, coordinators, and teachers may request a review of a student's attendance in PGCPs courses by the SIT if a student is in jeopardy of exceeding unlawful absences, as explained in AP 5113.
- c. Attendance interventions initiated by administrators, specialty program coordinators, or school counselors will include a parent/legal guardian

conference(s) and strategic intervention(s) provided by the School Intervention Team (SIT). Whenever it is determined that a student's attendance requires intervention, the SIT will provide written notification to the parent/legal guardian.

- d. If a student with a disability that has an IEP is experiencing attendance difficulties (i.e. school avoidance, medical issues) which are impeding their ability to access the general education curriculum, the IEP team including the parent(s), shall convene to consider the use of positive behavioral interventions and supports, and other strategies, to address the attendance concerns.
 - e. Students with chronic absences, both lawful and unlawful, will be referred to the Student Intervention Team (SIT) to address the underlying problems that lead to the absenteeism. This is inclusive of students with 504 accommodations and students with an Individualized Education Program (IEP). A SIT or IEP meeting will be convened to discuss the attendance issues.
 - f. If the student's attendance does not improve after the established intervention has been implemented, the withdrawal process from the program will be initiated.
3. Academic Expectations
- a. Language Immersion programs offer challenging and innovative instructional content for students who are interested in this uniquely focused and specialized curriculum. It is essential for students to attain at least minimal levels of proficiency in required courses. This level of achievement is necessary to ensure academic success in subsequent required courses and increases at each grade level. Program participants are also required to attain English language proficiency comparable to students at the same grade level who are instructed only in English.
 - b. Immersion students in Grade K-1, who show limited growth in language acquisition, as demonstrated by formal and informal literacy assessments, will be given academic assistance.
 - c. Immersion students in Grades 2-8 who fail to attain a "C" average or 2.0 or higher in one or more of the core academic courses, in any marking period, will be given academic assistance. Students in Grades 9-12 who fail to attain a "70%" or higher in Language Immersion classes will be given academic support.

- d. Students enrolled in Immersion Language Arts courses in Grade 7 will receive World Language high school credit for level 1. Students enrolled in Immersion Language Arts courses in Grade 8 will receive World Language high school credit for level 2. These credits count toward high school graduation requirements. This does not apply to courses taken prior to July 2019 as these have not been aligned to World Language standards.

4. Academic Difficulties

- a. The classroom teacher or school-based specialty program coordinator will refer the student needing academic support to the Student Intervention Team (SIT) per Administrative Procedure 5124 (SIT and SST).
- b. The academic support plan will be discussed and created by the SIT to include classroom-level interventions and other supports as needed. The program coordinator will provide written notification of the finalized academic support plan to the parent/legal guardian.
- c. Students who have received academic interventions or support for the identified time period and have not consistently improved their academic achievement will be referred to the Student Support Team (SST) for further strategies and/or interventions. The Program Coordinator/SST Chair or Principal's designee will notify the parent/legal guardian in writing that the student has been referred to SST. Additionally, the parent/legal guardian will be invited to the SST meeting.
- d. Once the student is referred to SST, the academic support plan developed will be implemented and monitored as determined by the team. If the student does not progress academically after the established timeframe, by way of passing grades, the SST should determine if a referral to the Section 504 team or Individualized Education Program (IEP) team is necessary. If the student is ineligible for a 504 plan or IEP, the Principal, in consultation with the school-based program coordinator, will decide whether the student can remain in the program or the student must return back to the comprehensive school program and notify the parent/legal guardian, Instructional Director, and the Office of Pupil Accounting and School Boundaries of the decision, as needed.
- e. At any time, parent/legal guardian, teachers, counselors, and/or administrators/coordinators may review the student's grades in the student information system.
- f. Students with IEPs/504 plans

- 1) Whenever it is determined that a student with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or a 504 plan is experiencing academic difficulties, the school-based program coordinator will provide written notification of that action to the parent/legal guardian, teachers of record, and the student's IEP/504 case manager. The school-based program coordinator, the student's parent/legal guardian, and/or the IEP/504 case manager will determine whether the IEP/504 team should convene to address the student's need for academic support.
- 2) If the student is not making sufficient progress toward achievement of their annual IEP/504 goals at the end of any marking period, the IEP/504 team, including the parent/legal guardian, shall convene an IEP/504 meeting to determine the academic support and services that will be provided to the student, as appropriate (refer to the PGCPs Special Education Process Guide).

A parent may appeal a recommendation for removal as described in the Appeal Process below.

5. Behavioral Difficulties

- a. A student is considered to be experiencing behavioral difficulty when: (1) exhibiting disciplinary conduct that significantly and/or persistently disrupts the educational environment; (2) causes actual or potential harm to other students, staff, or self; or (3) is out of compliance with the Code of Student Conduct in the Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook, as documented in the student information system.
- b. For students who are suspended ten (10) days or more in a school year, if the student has an IEP or the behavior may be related to any disability of the student, the disciplinary procedures for special education must be followed.
- c. Behavioral support initiated by administrators, coordinators, and/or school counselors will include a parent/legal guardian conference, strategic intervention provided by the SIT, and a written behavior support plan in accordance with AP 5124.
- d. Depending on the intervention, the behavior support plan should be reviewed and monitored by the SIT/SST for the identified time period. However, the parent/legal guardian, teachers, counselors, administrators/coordinators may request a behavioral review of a student's conduct by the SIT at any time.

- e. Due to the unique settings in which students are taught, certain behaviors may be grounds for a student forfeiting their placement in the program. The SIT and the Principal will weigh the specific circumstances of each case and the range of interventions, management strategies, and responses needed in accordance with the Code of Student Conduct in the Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook and state and federal law.
- f. The SIT will reconvene as appropriate to discuss the student's progress.

In the case of a student with an IEP who is experiencing behavioral difficulties, the IEP team will convene as appropriate to consider the use of positive behavioral interventions, supports and other strategies to address the student's behavior. This may include but is not limited to, developing behavior goals, conducting a Functional Behavioral Assessment, and/or the need to implement a Behavioral Intervention Plan to address the student's interfering behavior. The student's IEP team will reconvene as appropriate to discuss the student's progress.

6. Academic, Behavior and Attendance Withdrawal

- a. If a student is not making progress after going through the SIT and/or SST process, including interventions and support plans, the school may begin discussing withdrawal from the program.
- b. If the team determines that withdrawal is the next step and a transfer back to the boundary school is recommended, the Principal will:
 - 1) Create an official withdrawal letter to include information on the appeal process.
 - 2) Communicate with the Central Office Program Supervisor who will provide a form for the documentation to be uploaded. The Central Office Program Supervisor will work with the school-based program coordinator to review all documentation and provide a recommendation to move on to the Instructional Director.
 - 3) Communicate in an email the recommendation along with the documentation to the Instructional Director, Associate Superintendent, Chief of School Support and Leadership and copy the appropriate Central Office Program Supervisor.
 - 4) Upon approval of feedback and agreement from the Instructional Director and Central Office Program Supervisor, Associate Superintendent, Chief

of School Support and Leadership, and the appropriate program Supervisor, the school counselor/registrar will advise the parent/legal guardian on the withdrawal and registration processes (see AP 5111 Registration and Withdrawal of Students) and will send a copy of the withdrawal letter to the parent/legal guardian via the confirmed email address on file in the student information system.

- 5) The Principal will also send a copy of the withdrawal letter to the Office of Pupil Accounting and School Boundaries. Once this is completed, the student will be removed from the program file.
- c.
- If a student with an IEP/504 plan is being recommended for withdrawal after the IEP/504 team has also reviewed it, the IEP/504 team must also determine the appropriate placement for which the student's IEP/plan can be implemented, as written. The Principal will then follow the steps in the previous bullet.
 - 1) Documentation must be maintained for easy access so that it may be provided to the Office of Appeals in case there is an appeal. The withdrawal supporting documentation must include (1) the student's withdrawal letter; (2) the student's appropriate support plan that the school implemented; and (3) any other documentation pertaining to the student's withdrawal (*e.g.*, report card, attendance record, emails related to support, etc.).
 - 2) This packet should be filed in the cumulative folder behind the withdrawal letter.
 - 3) For behavior withdrawals, it should be noted that a student may be subject to immediate removal from the specialty program for documented behavioral violations that include, but are not limited to: arson, assault, bullying, sexual harassment, theft, threat, use/distribution of controlled substances, and use/possession of weapons or instruments used as such.
 - 4) Withdrawal should only take place at the end of the first semester or the end of the year and after grades have been published.
 - 5) A parent/legal guardian may appeal a recommendation for removal as described in the letter sent and in the Appeal Process below.

7. Appeal Process

- a. A parent/legal guardian who wishes to appeal a withdrawal decision must submit a written appeal to the Chief Academic Officer within ten (10) business days of the timestamp on the email containing the letter of

withdrawal. The student is enrolled at their boundary school pending the decision of the appeal.

- b. The parent/legal guardian should indicate in their written appeal the reason for seeking a review of the decision and may include additional information for consideration.
- c. The Chief Academic Officer will determine if there was a material departure from the policies and procedures by the program coordinator, Principal, or Instructional Director which adversely impacted the appellant.
- d. The Chief Academic Officer will render a decision based on the information provided by the school and the parent/legal guardian in alignment with this administrative procedure. Notification of this decision will be sent electronically via the confirmed email address on file in the student information system.
- e. An appeal of the decision of the Chief Academic Officer to the Office of Appeals be made in writing and received by the Appeals Office within ten (10) business days of the date on the decision letter by the Chief Academic Officer.
- f. The parent/legal guardian should indicate in their written appeal the reason for seeking a review of the decision and may include additional information for consideration.
- g. The Office of Appeals will determine if there was a material departure from the policies and procedures by the school Program Coordinator, Principal, or Instructional Director that adversely impacted the appellant.
- h. The Office of Appeals will render a decision based on the information provided by the school, the parent/legal guardian, and Chief Academic Officer in alignment with this administrative procedure.
- i. An appeal from the decision by the Office of Appeals to the Board of Education must be made in writing and received by the Board Office within 30 calendar days of the date on the decision letter by the Office of Appeals, acting as the Superintendent's designee.
- j. The Board of Education will determine if there was a material departure from the policies and procedures by the school Program Coordinator or Principal that adversely impacted the appellant.
- k. If additional information is included in the appeal to the Board of Education,

the Office of Appeals will be allowed to respond in writing and shall provide a copy of its response to the appellant before the Board of Education considers the appeal.

- l. The Board of Education’s decision shall be rendered in writing.
- m. If the decision to withdraw the student is overturned by an appeal at any level, and the parent/legal guardian re-enrolls the student at the specialty program school, the school counselor will add the student to the SIT agenda regarding classroom-level interventions and other supports as needed for reacclimatizing.

VI. MONITORING AND COMPLIANCE: In an effort to ensure that the enrollment and appeals processes are implemented, the following monitoring tools and processes will be utilized annually.

- A. Grades, attendance, and behavior will be monitored by the Immersion Programs Academic Dean semiannually.
- B. The school team will review the enrollment file and appeals process by September 30 of each school year. A record containing the staff signature to signify completion of this task will be kept on file in the principal’s office for four years and made available for review.

VII. RELATED PROCEDURES:

- Administrative Procedure 5111 – Registration and Withdrawal of Students
- Administrative Procedure 5111.1 – Admission to Pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten, and First Grade
- Administrative Procedure 5113 – Student Attendance, Absence, and Truancy
- Administrative Procedure 5121.1 – Grading and Reporting for Elementary Schools Early Childhood through Grade Five
- Administrative Procedure 5121.2 – Grading and Reporting for Middle Schools Grade 6 through Grade 8
- Administrative Procedure 5123.2 – General Procedures Pertaining to Promotion, Retention and Acceleration of Students
- Administrative Procedure 5124 – Student Intervention Team (SIT) and Student Support Team (SST)
- Administrative Procedure 6148 – Lottery and Audition Administration and Selection Procedures

VIII. MAINTENANCE AND UPDATE OF THESE PROCEDURES: This Administrative Procedure originates with the Division of Academics, Immersion

Office and will be updated as needed.

IX. CANCELLATIONS AND SUPERSEDURES: This Administrative Procedure supersedes Administrative Procedures 6144, Language Immersion Programs, dated October 16, 2023, for Language Programs.

X. EFFECTIVE DATE: December 16, 2024

Attachments: