

A 2024–2025 Evaluation of One-Way Immersion Programs at MCPS

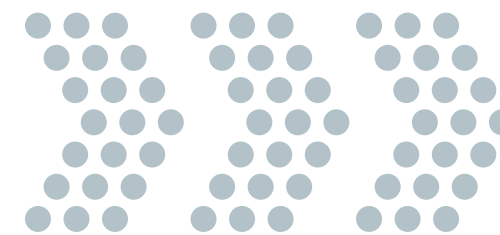
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Shared Accountability
Applied Research and Evaluation





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One-Way Immersion Programs



Executive Summary

Evaluation Scope

MCPS offers One-Way Immersion (OWI) programs across seven elementary schools with two schools offering French, three offering Spanish, and two offering Chinese. French and Spanish programs are full-immersion, with all core subjects (reading, writing, mathematics, science and social studies) taught in the immersion language (also referred to as the target language). The Chinese program is partial immersion model where mathematics and science are taught in the target language, while one school additionally includes social studies. This evaluation aimed to assess program effectiveness and student progress in biliteracy and academic achievement.

Methods

This implementation/process and outcome evaluation used a multiple-case study with a mixed-methods design to examine program implementation and the experiences of staff and parents. Data were collected through 13 interviews with each school's immersion team leader (N=7) and most principals (N=6), as well as surveys of immersion teachers and parents. Teacher surveys were completed by 12 of 24 (50%) French immersion teachers and 18 of 60 (30%) Spanish immersion teachers. Responses to closed-ended questions from Chinese immersion teachers were excluded in this report due to a very low sample size (only 3 of 7 teachers responded). Additionally, a total of 612 parent surveys were received (46% response rate): 236 from French immersion, 273 from Spanish immersion, and 101 from Chinese immersion. To measure student outcomes, a quasi-experimental design compared student performance on assessments in each immersion program with matched groups of non-immersion students. Assessments to measure proficiency in the target language were not available. Additionally, proficiency on the Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program (MCAP) English Language Arts/Literacy (ELA/L) and Mathematics, and Measures of Academic Progress Growth in Reading (MAP-R) and Mathematics (MAP-M), were compared to the overall district.

Findings

Successes: Staff interviews and open-ended staff and parent survey responses emphasized a dedicated staff and supportive community. Staff across the immersion programs were consistently praised for their adaptability with instructional resources, and strong commitment to student success. Staff also attributed the ongoing success of the programs to the engagement of parents and supportive community. Additionally, each immersion program shared unique successes that staff believed strengthened their schools. Examples included acquired instructional resources, the strong use of the target language among the full immersion programs, a new Spanish language arts curriculum, and the cultural message about the value of being multilingual. Overall, staff satisfaction with the programs was strong. All French immersion teachers and a high majority of Spanish immersion teachers (88%) who responded to the survey, reported being satisfied. Both French and Spanish teachers who responded to the survey, reported implementing math and language arts extremely or very well (92% and 88% for language arts, respectively, and 100% for math). Most parents across the immersion programs, who responded to the survey, were satisfied and would recommend it to others. Satisfaction was highest in the French (95%) and Spanish (93%) immersion programs. The vast majority (95% or more) of parents across all programs reported their students enjoyed being in the immersion.

One-Way Immersion Programs



Executive Summary

Findings

Challenges and Needs: Through collected data, several key challenges emerged across the programs.

- *Limited Access to Instructional Materials in the Target Language.* Across all three immersion programs, teachers reported challenges accessing accurate, complete, and district-approved instructional materials in the target language. MCPS Science and Social Studies resources were often unavailable or late (e.g., after the marking period began), only partially translated, or contained errors. Although Eureka math was available in all three languages, teachers—particularly in French and Chinese—reported numerous translation errors and noted that the materials could not be modified by school staff. Survey results showed that 73% of French and 33% of Spanish immersion teachers were dissatisfied with Social Studies materials, and 62% of French and 44% of Spanish immersion teachers with Science materials. Despite concerns, teachers reported high overall satisfaction with the math instructional materials. Additionally, French immersion staff identified the absence of a district-purchased French language arts curriculum as a major gap. Without a standardized curriculum, teachers must spend significant time locating resources, obtaining district approval, and translating or creating materials to align with standards; 54% of French immersion teachers who responded to the survey reported dissatisfaction with their language arts instructional materials.
- *Gaps in Assessing and Monitoring in the Target Language.* A critical challenge across all three immersion programs was the lack of assessments to monitor student progress and measure target-language attainment. Standardized assessments are essential to understanding growth, evaluating program effectiveness, and keeping parents informed in addition to identifying student needs.
- *Limited Support for Students with Academic or Special Needs.* Immersion staff across the programs reported significant challenges in providing adequate support for students with academic or special needs, highlighting a shortage of bilingual paraeducators and special education personnel. Additionally, special education services are required to be provided in English, which staff members report can reduce the effectiveness of instruction in the target language. Further, staff note that immersion classes, operating with full enrollment, often lack allocated paraeducator support compared to non-immersion classrooms. According to the survey, only 23% of French teachers and 47% of Spanish teachers felt students received support services as needed.
- *Supporting Students with Chinese Proficiency.* Staff explained that while many parents expect students to develop Chinese proficiency, this is unrealistic in a partial immersion program where instruction in the target language is limited to math and science without dedicated target language teaching time. Moreover, no assessments are available to gauge language attainment or communicate progress to parents.

One-Way Immersion Programs

Findings — Continued

- *Need for Immersion-Specific Professional Development (PD).* Staff in the French and Spanish immersion programs expressed the need for targeted PD and support, as well as greater alignment and consistency across schools. This included additional training and guidance on the new Spanish language arts curriculum. From the survey, 75% French and 67% Spanish teachers who responded to the survey reported professional development opportunities adequately prepared them for immersion instruction and 39% French and 56% Spanish indicated that district-level staff provided sufficient support for program implementation.
- *Needed Criteria Policy for Continuation in the Program.* Staff expressed a pressing need for a structured “off-ramp” for students who are not progressing and whose continuation in the program is not what’s best for the student. This concern was paired with a call for greater school-level decision-making authority and the establishment of formal criteria, such as performance-based benchmarks, to determine student success and eligibility to continue in the program.
- *Parent Concerns.* Parental recommendation rates remained high (89%–97%), though respondents noted that families should consider the program's structure and potential challenges for students needing extra support. Most parents (82%–90%) intended for their child to continue to middle school, with Chinese immersion parents reporting the highest likelihood. Notably, intent in the Spanish and Chinese programs decreased as the student grade levels progressed. Among families not planning to continue into middle school, the most frequently cited reason was the distance of the assigned school, followed by a preference for their neighborhood school, specific concerns regarding the immersion middle school, and perceived program limitations. More broadly, the most common immersion program concerns were academic, including the need for better support for struggling learners, English language development, and target language (expressed most strongly by parents in the Chinese immersion program). Additional concerns included staffing, sibling enrollment, communication, and the long-term progression to middle and high school.

Student Enrollment and Continuation to Middle School. Overall, the French immersion program had 574 enrolled students in 2024–2025 and was primarily students identified as White (42.9%), followed by Black or African American (22.8%) and Hispanic/Latino (15.5%), with 15.5% of students receiving FARMS services. The Spanish immersion program had 670 students and was primarily Hispanic/Latino (35.7%) and White (33.1%), followed by Black or African American (17.8%), with 12.8% of students receiving FARMS services. The Chinese immersion program had 297 students enrolled and was primarily Asian (42.1%), followed by students identifying as Two or More Races (20.9%) and White (19.9%), with 9.8% receiving FARMS services. For each program, the distribution of students’ race/ethnicity varied by school and grade level.

One-Way Immersion Programs



Executive Summary

Findings— Continued

- Most immersion students continued into middle school immersion after Grade 5 in both 2023–2024 and 2024–2025, although Spanish immersion showed a decrease in 2024–2025, likely due to changes in program articulation at the middle school level. Specifically, 61.2% and 72.4% of French immersion students, 83.1% and 63.3% of Spanish immersion students, and 79.6% and 80% of Chinese immersion students advanced to their middle school immersion programs. Among those who did not continue, most enrolled in Level 1 or 2 of the same target language at their home middle school or a magnet middle school.

Student Outcomes. Grade 3 and Grade 5 immersion students outperformed the district in both English literacy and math on Spring 2024 MCAP and MAP Growth assessments, often by substantial margins.

When compared to a matched comparison group, while controlling for student demographics and service receipt, immersion students generally performed as well as or better than their peers, with the most notable results observed in English literacy for students in Spanish immersion and in Grade 5 math for students in Chinese immersion. No results indicated significantly lower performance among the immersion groups. Statistically higher adjusted scores were found for:

- French Immersion: Grade 3 students in math (MAP-M).
- Spanish Immersion: Grade 3 students in literacy (MCAP ELA/L and MAP-R) and math (MCAP Math); Grade 5 students in MCAP ELA/L.
- Chinese Immersion: Grade 5 students in math (MCAP Math and MAP-M).

Conclusion

Despite strong support for the immersion programs from staff and parents, high demand as evidenced by waitlists, and outcome analyses showing that immersion students perform the same or better than their peers, there is a vital need to strengthen several key areas to better support program goals, student success, and consistency within the programs. Importantly, standardized assessments are needed to measure students' attainment of the target language and evaluate program effectiveness. The following recommendations aim to optimize the implementation of immersion programs: 1) implement target language assessments and improve consistency of district required assessments, 2) provide a French immersion language arts curriculum and translated instructional resources for all immersion programs, 3) offer targeted professional learning opportunities to immersion staff, 4) review immersion program enrollment and continuation procedures, along with goal alignment, 5) consider expanding the team leader role, and 6) plan a future evaluation of Middle School immersion programs and student biliteracy pathways.

Program Description

MCPS offers world language immersion programs, also referred to as One-Way Immersion (OWI) programs, in French, Spanish, and Chinese at seven elementary schools (excluding Two-Way Immersion). “The language immersion programs are an educational approach in which students are taught the curriculum content through the medium of a second language. In this way, immersion students not only learn the content, but also gain knowledge of the language in which it is taught.” (MCPS, 2025a, 2025b).


Entry in Kindergarten or Grade 1 is lottery-based, managed by the Division of Consortia Choice and Application Program Services (DCCAPS) at MCPS. Parents complete an interest form in the spring for the following school year and may apply to multiple programs. Admission is limited, and factors for admission may consider geographic location or give preference to local students. Admission in Grades 2–5 requires passing a placement test, which evaluates the student’s reading, writing, and speaking skills in the target language (MCPS, 2025d). Parents are notified in mid-May of lottery results and can then choose whether to enroll. Students not selected are placed on a waiting list and may receive offers through the first semester if space becomes available. In Grade 5, students indicate whether they plan to continue in the feeder middle school immersion program.


Program Components


The One-Way Immersion programs are offered in three different languages with varying eligibility. See subsequent pages for more details of each program.

Full Immersion: where all core subjects are taught in the target language.

Partial Immersion: where a portion of the curriculum is taught in the target language.

 **French:** Full immersion offered in two schools, Maryvale ES and Sligo Creek ES. All core subjects (reading, writing, mathematics, science, and social studies) are taught in French.

 **Spanish:** Full immersion offered in three schools: Burnt Mills ES, Rock Creek Forest ES, and William Tyler Page ES. All core subjects (reading, writing, mathematics, science, and social studies) are taught in Spanish.

 **Chinese:** Partial immersion in two schools, Potomac ES and Bayard Rustin ES. Math and science are taught in Mandarin (plus social studies at Bayard Rustin ES).



Lottery Selection: Depending on the school, there are 24 (one class) or 48 (two classes) seats available in the lottery for students entering Kindergarten. The available seats for students entering Grades 1–5 are those seats vacated by students who withdraw from the program. According to one immersion school website (MCPS, 2025c), approximately 652 students applied for 264 Kindergarten slots in school year 2024–2025.

Factors that may be considered when running each school’s lottery, in addition to seats available, include the student’s high school cluster (location), socio-economic status and poverty, and other factors as identified by superintendent considerations. Additionally, those students’ older siblings currently enrolled in the language immersion program are given weight in the lottery process (i.e., Sibling Factor), but are not automatically enrolled unless they entered prior to 2017–2018 (MCPS, 2025a, MCPS, 2025d). This was changed from automatic enrollment for younger siblings (i.e. Sibling Link), because data showed that almost a third of admitted students, and sometimes up to 46%, were siblings which hindered the equity of access for all students (Metis, 2016).



Transportation: Immersion programs provide transportation from central stops within their service areas, with parents/guardians responsible for getting students to and from those stops. At the time of this report, transportation for the 2025–2026 school year is pending budget approval (MCPS, 2025d).



The elementary immersion programs began in 1974 with MCPS's first French immersion program, followed by a Spanish immersion program in 1977. Immersion programs were developed with the adoption of Board Policy ACD, *Quality Integrated Education*, in 1975, which encouraged voluntary student transfers to promote racial and ethnic diversity in target schools. Over time, these programs, together with the middle school programs, developed into part of MCPS's larger world languages initiative (Metis Associates, 2016).

This evaluation examined how the OWI programs were implemented across elementary schools, the demographics of students enrolled, perceptions and experiences of staff (Immersion Team Leaders, immersion teachers and school administrators), and outcomes compared to similar students not in an immersion program. To narrow the scope, the outcome analysis focused on Grades 3 and 5. Research shows that by Grade 3, students typically meet or exceed the proficiency levels of their non-immersion peers. These grades also use the MCAP and MAP growth assessments, and Grade 3 is a district priority. Findings are presented separately for each language program: French, Spanish, and Chinese.

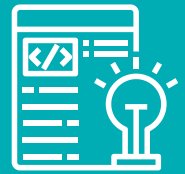
Purpose of Evaluation



This program evaluation aims to provide information to support the MCPS programs' effectiveness and to measure the progress of students in the elementary One-Way Immersion programs related to biliteracy and academic achievement.

Research Questions

- 1 How are the One-Way Immersion programs implemented across elementary schools?
- 2 What are the perceptions and experiences among elementary school staff (i.e., immersion team leaders/coordinators, teachers, and principals) of One-Way Immersion programs, including professional development?
- 3 What are the perceptions and experiences among parents/guardians of elementary children who attend One-Way Immersion programs?
- 4 What is the demographic make-up of elementary students enrolled in the One-Way Immersion programs?
- 5 What percentage of elementary immersion students continue to a middle school immersion program?
- 6 What is the academic achievement of Grade 3 and Grade 5 students in English Language Arts (ELA) among students in the One-Way Immersion programs compared to the district and to their similar peers who are not enrolled?



This implementation/process and outcome evaluation of MCPS One-Way Immersion programs used a multiple-case study with a mixed-methods design to examine program implementation and the experiences of staff and parents. Data were collected through interviews with each school’s immersion team leader and principal, as well as surveys of immersion teachers and parents. For the outcome portion, a quasi-experimental design compared student performance in each immersion program with matched groups of non-immersion students.

Implementation Methods



Data & Measures

- **Interviews** were conducted with immersion team leaders and principals.
- **Surveys** were administered to immersion teachers and parents/guardians.
- **Document Reviews** included materials and websites describing background program background information.



Sample

- Thirteen interviews were conducted from all seven immersion schools: seven Team Leaders and six of seven school principals.
- Teacher surveys were completed by 12 of 24 (50%) French immersion teachers and 18 of 60 (30%) Spanish immersion teachers. Responses from Chinese immersion teachers were excluded in this report due to very low sample (only 3 of 7 teachers responded); however, some open-ended responses were used.
- A total of 612 parent surveys were received (46% response rate): 101 from Chinese immersion, 236 from French immersion, and 273 from Spanish immersion; two parents who responded to the survey, did not specify a program.



Analysis

- Descriptive statistics were used to analyze closed-ended survey responses.
- Content analysis was used to identify themes from interviews, with teacher open-ended responses incorporated for theme development and context since there were too few to report separately. Parent open-ended responses were also analyzed to generate categories of similar responses.
- Document reviews and interviews were used to support interpretation of program implementation and context.

Outcome Methods



Data & Measures

To assess academic achievement, measures included:

- FY 2024 spring MCAP ELA/Literacy (ELA/L) and MAP-R for Grades 3 and 5.
- FY 2024 spring MCAP Math and MAP-M for Grades 3 and 5.



Sample

- Immersion Students: Grade 3 and Grade 5 students enrolled in immersion programs during 2023–2024.
- Non-Immersion Students (comparison group): A matched sample of Grade 3 and Grade 5 students not enrolled in immersion programs during 2023–2024. Propensity scores based on gender, race/ethnicity, receipt of Free and Reduced-price Meals System (FARMS), Individualized Education Program (IEP) services, and Emergent English Learner (EML) status, were used to create the comparison group. A 1:2 matching ratio (two comparison students per immersion student) was applied to increase statistical power due to the small immersion sample.
- Enrollment and demographic characteristics of each immersion program were described using students enrolled during 2024–2025.



Analysis

- ANCOVA (Analysis of Covariance) was used to compare 2024 MCAP (ELA/L and math) and MAP (reading and math) adjusted mean scores between immersion and comparison students, while controlling for race/ethnicity, gender, and service receipt.
- Descriptive statistics were used to compare percentage proficient in literacy and math assessments between immersion students and MCPS overall.

The following costs were for One-Way Immersion programs in the 2024–2025 school year:

- **Curriculum and instructional materials: \$50,000**
- **Summer stipend for Immersion team leader positions: \$10,500**



OWI Site Description

The following tables describe the type of school, immersion language, lottery eligibility, middle school feeder school, number of classes per grade, and number of seats per class for each immersion school.

School	Language	Lottery Eligibility	Program Type	Middle School Continuation	Number of Classes per Grade
Maryvale ES	French	Regional	Full	Gaithersburg MS	2 per grade
Sligo Creek ES	French	Regional	Full	Silver Spring International MS	2 per grade
Burnt Mills ES	Spanish	Local, then elementary feeders to Francis Scott Key MS, then countywide	Full	White Oak MS	1 per grade
Rock Creek Forest ES	Spanish	Countywide	Full	Westland MS, Silver Spring International MS	2 per grade
William Tyler Page ES	Spanish	Local school, then countywide	Full	White Oak MS	2 per grade
Bayard Rustin ES	Chinese	Countywide	Partial	Herbert Hoover MS	1 per grade (1 teacher per two grades)
Potomac ES	Chinese	Local School, then countywide	Partial	Herbert Hoover MS	1 per grade (1 teacher per two grades for K/Grade 1 and Grade 1/2)

- Full immersion programs: The core curriculum (reading, writing, mathematics, social studies, and science) is taught in the second language. Partial immersion programs: A portion of the curriculum is taught in the second language.
- Rock Creek Forest Elementary Immersion students who reside within the catchment area of SSIMS may elect to continue with the immersion program at their home school.

Number of Seats per Class per Grade Level

Kindergarten	24 per class	Grade 3	26 per class
Grade 1	25 per class	Grade 4	28 per class
Grade 2	25 per class	Grade 5	28 per class



Program Description: French Immersion

The following section addresses Evaluation Q1: How are OWI programs implemented across the elementary schools? The goal, instructional format, and curricula was collected from document reviews, school websites, and staff interviews.

Component	Description
<p>Goal</p>	<p>Students who graduate from the French immersion Program in fifth grade should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand, speak, read and write French with a high level of language proficiency. Listening and reading skills should be near native-like. • Perform on standardized achievement tests in English as well as or better than their monolingual peers. • Successfully continue their studies in both English and French at the intermediate/middle school level. • Describe and understand cultural aspects of French-speaking communities around the world. (MCPS, 2025e)
<p>Instructional Format</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students receive all instruction in French, except for specials (art, music, physical education) in English. • Second semester Grade 4 students receive writing instruction in English with increased writing instruction in Grade 5. (MCPS, 2025f) • Data from interviews described that grade-level immersion teachers within each school, plan with each other on a regular basis. Additionally, all school grade-level teachers plan together for math, science, and social studies.
<p>Curriculum</p>	<p>Language Arts/Literacy: Interviews indicated that there was no official curriculum. The district-wide language arts/literacy program, Amplify CKLA, was not available in French. According to the school websites (MCPS, 2025e), the French program follows the former district-wide elementary curriculum, MCPS 2.0 (phased out in 2020–2021). Interviews described some lessons were still being used, but teachers also created their own lessons and drew on multiple resources, which varied by grade level and teacher. Examples included translated portions of prior curricula (e.g., Benchmark and MCPS 2.0); the Calgary Board of Education (CBE) French word study and phonics program (K–3); “Tika Tao” and “RAZ Kids” French readers; Reading A–Z; syllabic method resources from the French government; the Montarine program (Grade 5); self-created lessons aligned with CKLA themes; Pass Education resources; and other materials and French books identified by staff.</p> <p>Math: Eureka Math (Great Minds), the district’s elementary math curriculum, was translated into French for use as the math curriculum. Interviews revealed that many also supplement with Khan Academy or other resources in French.</p> <p>Social Studies and Science: District-wide MCPS social studies and science lessons were translated into French for the OWI schools. From interviews, many teachers also created or supplemented the lessons with resources in French.</p>



Program Description: Spanish Immersion

Component	Description
Goal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> According to a Spanish immersion school's website, the goal of the program is: To understand, speak, read, and write in both English and Spanish. (MCPS, 2025b)
Instructional Format	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students receive all instruction in Spanish, with the exception of specials (art, music, physical education), which are taught in English (MCPS, 2025g). Starting in the second semester of Grade 4, students receive writing instruction in English with increased writing instruction in Grade 5. One school, Page Elementary, departmentalizes its core subjects. This means a teacher will teach two sections of language arts while another teacher will teach two sections of math. Information collected through interviews revealed that grade-level immersion teachers plan with each other for language arts and all grade-level teachers within a school plan together for math, science, and social studies. Additionally, the Grade 2 teams share materials with each other. Furthermore, the team leaders of these schools frequently collaborate and support each other.
Curriculum	<p>Language Arts/Literacy: 2024–2025 marked the first year of implementing the Spanish literature curriculum Houghton Mifflin Harcourt ¡Arriba la Lectura! in Kindergarten through Grade 5 (MCPSa, 2024). This Spanish curriculum was also chosen, and the first year of implementation, in MCPS One-Way Immersion schools. Prior to this year, the immersion schools used Benchmark Advance and Adelente. From staff interviews, many teachers also supplemented the Arriba curriculum using resources such as Conjuguemos, Duolingo, Esrellita, Epic, and other resources and books in Spanish.</p> <p>Math: Eureka Math (Great Minds), the district's elementary math curriculum, was translated into Spanish for use as the math curriculum. Note that the advanced courses Math 4/5 and 5/6 were taught in English at two of three OWI schools.</p> <p>Social Studies and Science: District-wide MCPS social studies and science lessons were translated into Spanish for the OWI schools. From interviews, some teachers also created or supplemented the lessons with resources in Spanish.</p>



Program Description: Chinese Immersion

Component	Description
<p>Goal</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Language immersion is an educational approach in which students are taught the curriculum content through the medium of a second language. In this way, immersion students not only learn the content, but also gain knowledge of the language in which it is taught.” (MCPS, 2025d) • “The goal is for students to achieve a proficient level of the target language as they learn grade-specific academic content.” (MCPS, 2025c).
<p>Instructional Format</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students attend part of their instructional day in the Chinese environment, and the other part in English. They receive Math and Science instruction in Mandarin Chinese. One school also delivers Social Studies instruction in Chinese. • Note that the advanced courses Math 4/5 and 5/6 in at least one school, were taught in English based on the number of students and availability of teachers. • At one school, Potomac ES, students also receive one hour per week of direct English instruction (MCPS, 2025h). • Most teachers in the Chinese immersion programs are assigned two grade levels. For example, one teacher teaches Kindergarten in Mandarin for half the day and Grade 1 for the other half. The same structure applies to Grades 2 and 3, and Grades 4 and 5. The exception is Potomac Elementary, which has a designated teacher for Grade 4 and for Grade 5.
<p>Curriculum</p>	<p>Students follow the same curriculum as their non-immersion peers.</p> <p>Math (Chinese): Eureka Math (Great Minds), the district’s elementary math curriculum, was translated into Chinese for use as the math curriculum.</p> <p>Science (Chinese) and Social Studies (Chinese in one school): Some district-wide MCPS science activities were translated into Chinese and available to the partial-immersion schools. Teachers translate remaining lessons and resources.</p> <p>English Language Arts (ELA): Amplify CKLA is used in English.</p>



District Level Assessments

The following chart shows the 2024–2025 districtwide assessments given to students in the immersion programs and in what language. Most assessments are given in English; however the district math assessments (Eureka) are given to French and Spanish immersion students in the target language. Some of the Spanish immersion schools also give DIBELS, MAP-P and MAP-M in Spanish.

	French (2 schools)	Spanish (3 schools)	Chinese (2 schools)
District Assessments Language Arts	Not Applicable - Do not use CKLA curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not Applicable - Do not use CKLA curriculum 	All English - students receive CKLA curriculum in English
District Assessments Math	Eureka Math K-5 in French	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eureka Math K-5 in Spanish One school: Math 4/5 and 5/6 assessment in Spanish (Language of Instruction) Two schools: Math 4/5 and 5/6 assessment in English (Language of Instruction) 	All English
DIBELS K-2	Kindergarten only, in English . Grades 1-2 do not take.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One school: Fall Kindergarten in English, rest in Spanish Two schools: All Spanish 	All English - taught CKLA curriculum in English
MAP-Reading Grades 3-5	English , All Grades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One school: Grade 4 Spanish, Grades 3 and 5 in English Two schools: All English 	All English - taught CKLA curriculum in English
MAP-P Grades K-2	English , Grade 2 only	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One school: All English One school: All Spanish One school: Kindergarten in English, Grades 1-2 in Spanish.; <i>SY2026 will be all grades in English</i> 	All English
MAP Math Grades 3-5	English , All Grades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One school: All English Two schools: Grades 3-5 in Spanish, Math 4/5 and 5/6 in English (Language of Instruction) 	All English



French Immersion Successes

The following pages address Evaluation Q2: What are the perceptions and experiences among elementary school staff of One-Way Immersion programs?

The following themes regarding the successes of the French Immersion program, emerged from staff interviews (Immersion Team Leaders and Principals) and teacher open-ended responses incorporated for theme development and context since there were too few to report separately.

Theme: Dedicated and Hard Working Staff

Staff in the French Immersion programs were widely praised for their dedication, adaptability, and collaborative spirit. Teachers were recognized for their strong commitment to student success, their ability to adapt curriculum effectively, and their willingness to support one another by sharing resources. The leadership provided by immersion team leaders was described as phenomenal, with team leaders actively advocating for the program, engaging in meaningful dialogue with district leaders, and helping staff navigate challenges. Staff also expressed appreciation for the supportive administration and the presence of passionate, resourceful educators who consistently go above and beyond despite limited resources. The overall sense was one of a cohesive, resilient, and dedicated team.

Theme: Other Successes

Staff highlighted the following strengths and resources:

- The decodables (phonics-aligned early-reader texts), which were purchased by the county reading department.
- Staff shared that Grade 5 students speak and write in French and outperform their non-immersion school-level peers in English language learning.
- The phonics system was obtained from the CBE for Kindergarten through Grade 3, which staff report works well and is provided at no cost.
- Supportive parents and a strong sense of community.
- The success of students speaking exclusively in French at school. Teachers maintain at least 90% instruction in the target language, using gestures, visuals, and context clues to support comprehension. Classroom routines and expectations are established in the target language, enabling students to acquire everyday language naturally. Sometimes teachers may speak English to clarify an instruction, particularly in early grades.
- The continued engagement of former students, who return to visit, and secondary students, who return to earn SSL hours. At one school, seven students were selected for an enrichment program last year, and none left immersion to enroll elsewhere.
- Both French immersion programs received recognition with the La Belle award from the French government. This award allows access to certain websites for free, which can be used as instructional resources.



French Immersion Challenges and Needs

The following themes, along with illustrative quotes, related to French immersion challenges and needs that emerged from staff interviews (Immersion Team Leaders and Principals) and teacher open-ended responses incorporated for theme development and context since there were too few to report separately.

1 Key Theme: Lack of a Language Arts Curriculum in French

- Staff consistently highlighted the absence of a formal and systematic Language Arts curriculum in French as a major challenge. Without a standardized curriculum, they rely on prior or piecemeal resources and must spend significant time finding, translating, or creating materials to align with standards. This includes finding, researching, and evaluating books and novels to incorporate. The district's English Language Arts curriculum is not available in French, leaving immersion teachers without equivalent support or ready-to-use content. This lack of structure impacts consistency and increases workload.

2 Key Theme: Challenges with Translated Math, Science, and Social Studies Materials

- Although staff were grateful that Eureka Math is now provided in French (translated by Great Minds), they emphasized a major issue of many errors and incorrect translations, leading to confusion for students learning both math content and French. These errors have appeared in the books for years, but despite their efforts, staff have not been able to obtain corrected materials or the ability to copy and correct them. Examples include commas used instead of decimals throughout the math books, inaccurate words, and word problems that do not make sense. Some teachers have resorted to using supplemental materials to address areas with poor translation.
- Although MCPS Science and Social Studies lessons are to be provided with French translations, the delivery often falls short. Lessons are either not translated on time (i.e. prior to marking period or unit being taught), partially translated, inaccurately translated, or not translated at all. Furthermore, staff have found that the folders containing these lessons are often empty or contain incorrect links. This leaves immersion program staff feeling undervalued. Teachers attempt to find French lesson materials to fill the gap, but subject-matter content in French is difficult to locate (e.g., French-language materials on the American experience in Social Studies).

“ We do not have a curriculum, we have resources...teachers find texts and apply standards. It's always a magic act - each year. We/teachers do our best to meet all standards as professionals. ”

“ We/teachers are spending a lot of time finding supplemental material [for French language arts], translating [English materials], and finding books [in French] to supplement and meet the same standards. ”

“ We need resources that are in the native language or that have good translation because the Eureka [math] books we have are poorly translated. My request is that nothing should be rolled out if not fully translated [e.g. science]; it's better to use prior materials. ”

“ I had to translate a lot of the county-provided materials so that our French immersion students could have the same resources as their English peers. We need quality control. I understand we are [a small program] but the feeling is that we are not important. ”

3 Key Theme: Gaps in Assessing and Monitoring Student Progress in French

- There was no standard assessment provided to monitor students' progress in French, though staff emphasized such a tool is needed. Staff mentioned that a French version of an assessment similar to DIBELS exists but has been awaiting approval. Teachers often relied on their own running records and anecdotal assessments to track student progress. A commercially available language proficiency test, Avant STAMP, was used a few years ago to assess students in Grades 3 and 5; however, funding approval is required to use it again.

4 Key Theme: Need for Immersion-Specific Professional Development

- French immersion teachers reported having limited opportunities for professional development (PD) tailored to their needs. Some pointed to a summer training in 2024 for immersion teachers and a few in-school sessions led by team leaders, while others noted past experiences such as CBE phonics training in French or conferences they attended on their own initiative. Despite these examples, staff emphasized that, overall, PD specific to immersion instruction was lacking. Most received the same training as other teachers at their schools (e.g., engagement strategies, teaching reading to ELD students) and were trained on the English version of Eureka Math. Participation in outside PD opportunities is typically voluntary and does not include credits or stipends, which tends to limit attendance.
- Teachers emphasized the need for PD specifically designed for immersion instruction, including strategies for immersion teaching, cross-linguistic connections, transfer of skills, and oral language development. One teacher noted that separating immersion PD from English staff sessions would allow more time to adapt materials appropriately. Staff also expressed interest in Elementary instruction, mentorship opportunities, and greater collaboration among Maryland immersion teachers. A few suggested that increased resources and overall program support were even more pressing needs than PD itself.

“ We need more "official" data to gauge the linguistic progress of our students such as the STAMP test. ”

“ In addition to recurring and timely translated materials, we are also in need of access to and training in a reliable diagnostic tool in French, comparable to Dibels. ”

“ Staff should be getting summer training for topics related to immersion teaching, cross-linguistic connections and best practices. ”

“ We need our PD to be separate from English...when we attend an MCPS training it most often does not apply to the target language! ”

“ It's much less the "professional development" we as teachers need to receive - but a terrific deficiency on the part of MCPS to truly support the special character and special needs of a complex program such as this. ”



French Immersion Challenges and Needs

5 Key Theme: Limited Support for Students with Academic or Special Needs

- Immersion staff expressed significant concern about the lack of support for struggling students and those needing special education services, citing both insufficient staffing and limited support in the target language. They noted that many students in immersion programs do not receive the necessary assistance due to a shortage of paraeducators and special education teachers, especially those proficient in French; although one school mentioned they were lucky to have some support in French. Staff also pointed out that special education services are required to be provided in English, which can undermine the effectiveness of instruction in the target language. Additionally, instruction and interventions are often not aligned with the language of instruction. Teachers reported that support staff are sometimes not dedicated to immersion classrooms and are frequently pulled to cover other duties, further reducing the consistency of support.

6 Key Theme: Managing Immersion and Non-Immersion Within a School

- Administrators reported that balancing the immersion program with the non-immersion side of the school can be challenging. For example, some parents whose children applied to the immersion program and attend the school, but were not admitted through the lottery, may feel excluded. Immersion families are often more involved in program-specific activities, and requests may be made for resources or events that only serve the immersion program, excluding non-immersion students. Additionally, the school's Title I status—or perceptions of it—may be affected by the demographics of the non-immersion population, potentially limiting resources the school might otherwise have received.

Other Notable Feedback of Interest

- Some would like to see the immersion program expanded, either to more schools or in the case of one school, more than two classes per grade level.
- Can be challenging to find qualified staff and substitute teachers.
- Some students ride buses for a long time. It is important to assure they are on their bus and can get dropped off at home (e.g. adult available).



I have several students who would benefit from receiving interventions, but we do not have enough specialized staff speaking French to provide consistent service delivery.

Lack of Para's is a big issue because it's based on the whole student body; there is no support in some classes.



Unfortunately, the only support we currently have is the teacher. I would greatly appreciate having [staff] available to assist with students' IEPs, 504 plans, and students who need help, as this would significantly enhance their learning experience and provide the targeted help they require.



Distinct programs can create friction...we don't want our English side [of school] to suffer not getting services because we are in the same building....we are approaching a Title 1 school on English side, but on immersion side, we're not.



There is a parent perception that immersion get everything, which is not true...could be because of more parent involvement....there is a divide between parents.





Spanish Immersion Successes

The following themes regarding the successes of the Spanish Immersion program, emerged from staff interviews (Immersion Team Leaders and Principals) and teacher open-ended responses incorporated for theme development and context since there were too few to report separately.

Theme: New Spanish Curriculum

Overall, feedback on the new *Arriba la Lectura* Spanish Language Arts curriculum was largely positive. Staff reported that the curriculum is more engaging and child friendly with one noting, “Kids are engaged, the books are beautiful...we are excited about this curriculum.” Staff also mentioned that *Arriba* is a clear improvement over the previous curriculum, which was seen as too difficult and “kinda dry” for students. One staff member shared, “Teachers say the new *Arriba* curriculum is much better. The last curriculum was a disaster for teachers to instruct.”

While there was enthusiasm, some challenges remain, particularly the need for more Spanish-specific resources, such as those provided to non-immersion classes with their English language curriculum (e.g., pacing guides, slides, pausing day lessons), as well as more training for the new Spanish curriculum. It was also pointed out that immersion classes are no longer implementing the same ELA lessons as the non-immersion classes. Additionally, staff expressed varying opinions about the reading levels of the new Spanish curriculum: one commented the “texts are to their level”. while another stated that the curriculum is geared towards native speakers and that what the curriculum considers on grade level is too difficult, so they have to scaffold much more. Nonetheless, the general consensus is that *Arriba* is more student-friendly, better organized, and a welcome step forward in immersion classrooms.

Theme: Dedicated and Hard Working Staff

Staff feedback highlighted a strong appreciation for the personnel involved in the program, emphasizing their experience, dedication, teamwork, and individual strengths. Teachers were described as “amazing,” “passionate,” and highly effective in supporting students. Staff noted that they “work hard to adapt lessons, find resources, and work long hours,” that “teammates work well together,” and that they communicate with parents. The program is also praised for having supportive administration and team leaders, with specific acknowledgment of the DCCAP and World Language central office staff. Additionally, the presence of the new Reading Initiative (RI) position was viewed positively for its role in supporting intervention groups, addressing large class sizes, and providing enrichment across grades. Some staff remarked, “I feel honored to be part of this awesome program,” and “I have loved teaching at this school for many years.” Overall, staff were seen as a major strength of the program, contributing significantly to its success.



Theme: Other Successes

- Some staff noted that their school's departmentalization (i.e., teachers teaching math or ELA instead of both) is working well for their programs. It allows teachers to really know their subject and plan for learning groups more effectively. Additionally, if a teacher is absent one day, then the other grade level teacher can support and teach the students in Spanish. It can also provide a break for students to be with another teacher.
- Observing academic growth, on grade level with reading, doing well on standardized tests, and language acquisition among students was pointed out by some staff.
- Collaboration among Grade 4 teachers across schools to share materials.
- Engaged and involved parents and families who support the program and want to see it replicated.
- Exposure to Hispanic and Latin American culture.
- One principal highlighted a successful PD event implemented this year related to the school's focus on student engagement. The immersion team leader and ELD teachers videotaped successful classroom strategies and presented at an all-staff meeting. It brought all teachers together to celebrate and showcased both immersion and non-immersion teachers. It was very powerful and received positive feedback.

The following themes, along with illustrative quotes, related to Spanish immersion challenges and needs that emerged from staff interviews (Immersion Team Leaders and Principals) and teacher open-ended responses incorporated for theme development and context since there were too few to report separately.

1

Key Theme: Need for Targeted Professional Development and Support in Spanish Immersion

- Educators in the Spanish immersion program emphasized the need for more immersion-specific PD, clearer guidance on curriculum implementation, and increased support from bilingual specialists. While the new Arriba language arts curriculum was seen as a positive step, many staff reported receiving minimal training and having to navigate the materials independently. Compared to their non-immersion peers, immersion staff often received less targeted support. Staff also highlighted the need for greater alignment across Spanish immersion schools to ensure consistency, as well as more opportunities to collaborate with other immersion educators.

“ We could do so much better if we had more guidance across the county so the immersion programs were uniform.

More alignment so parents from one school aren't saying they do it this way and somewhere else it's different.

”

“ When we have training, it is not tailored to meet our students' needs. It feels as though we are navigating the difficulties of the curriculum on our own while still having to adhere to the guidelines of the English program

”

“ I am somewhat dissatisfied with the Language Art materials because they were given to us with no in-depth training. We have to navigate the curriculum to learn how to use the materials.

”

“ The new [Spanish] reading curriculum now has nothing to do with the English side of school.

While CKLA received two days of training, we only had one, making it difficult to navigate the dashboard and access resources efficiently.

”

2 Key Theme: Challenges with Translated Math, Science, and Social Studies Materials

- The responses from Spanish immersion program staff revealed significant and consistent challenges related to instructional resources, particularly in Science and Social Studies. Teachers frequently reported that materials were either unavailable in Spanish or not translated in time for a new marking period, forcing them to spend substantial time translating English-language resources themselves. Several noted that when new lessons or curricula were rolled out, translated materials were often not ready, creating planning and instructional delays. One staff member emphasized that translations should have been available at the same time as the English versions to ensure equitable access.
- Although the math curriculum, such as Eureka, was available in Spanish, it contained small errors and awkward language, including unnecessarily literal translations, and there were often not enough student books for new students who continued to arrive throughout the year. In reading, while the new curriculum Arriba was in Spanish, staff noted that it was designed for native Spanish speakers rather than learners, requiring teachers to create additional materials to meet student needs. Staff expressed that immersion programs were not prioritized equally compared to English-only classrooms, and this disparity placed an ongoing burden on teachers.

There are limited resources for the immersion programs. Teachers are spending hours on the weekends creating resources in Spanish.

For Arriba, still not enough resources and have to create much on our own such as pacing guide, slides, lessons for pausing days.

When there are limited teachers per grade level, you have to plan/translate/ execute everything yourself and no collaboration with other schools. I think we are tossed to the side a lot when it comes to specific needs of the program.

Instructional materials are often not available on time, requiring us to remind the county to release them before the quarter begins so we can plan effectively.

Had to translate marking period lessons ourselves (science or social studies) because we were still waiting, after the marking period began, but that is not okay. They should be ready to go or pay us more to translate.

3 Key Theme: A Criteria Policy for Students to Continue in the Program is Needed

- Staff expressed a pressing need for formalized criteria to determine student success and eligibility to remain in the Spanish immersion program. Currently, decisions to exit a student from the program rest primarily with parents, even when data indicate the student is not progressing in either language. Concerns were raised that students who remain in the program despite significant academic struggles may be set up to fail. Without an established “off-ramp,” students can continue through the program without mastering foundational skills, only for middle schools to later question their readiness or remove them from the immersion program. Respondents emphasized that, while immersion is often viewed as an enrichment or magnet program, it lacks performance-based benchmarks—such as assessments or measurable outcomes—found in similar programs. They called for clearer, district-supported protocols that allow schools to make data-informed decisions about whether a student should continue, balancing family preference with academic need.

“ We need off ramps to the program for when students not being successful and limit invites to grade 1. It would be great if the language office could come up with a way to catch kids at a certain point and ask whether this is the right program because they not making progress. ”

“ We had a middle school tell us they had to take a student [struggling and behind] out the program. In middle school immersion they can decide, we can't. ”

“ There is not criteria for success for students to continue in the program. There should be an option for the school to determine if a student is able to continue in the program. ”

“ We have students go through elementary without being able to read at grade level, speak the language or do the math because parents want to keep them in the program. This is allowed without taking into consideration that this is setting the students to fail and not succeed. ”

4 Key Theme: Limited Support for Students with Academic or Special Needs

- Staff expressed widespread concern about the lack of equitable support services for students in the immersion program, particularly those struggling academically or requiring special education. A major issue is the shortage of Spanish-speaking paraeducators and intervention staff, as well as the fact that students receive special education support in English, which can undermine their progress using the target language. Staff noted that immersion students are often pulled for services in English and then return to instruction in Spanish, which can be challenging for some learners. It was also mentioned that services are sometimes not offered because they are provided in English. Additionally, staff reported that the district lacks a clear, responsive process for identifying and supporting students with learning challenges. They pointed to the disparity in support compared to English-language classrooms, with immersion viewed more as an “enrichment” program despite the needs of some learners. Staff called for more bilingual (e.g., paraeducators and intervention teachers), smaller class sizes, and better coordination between the language and special education offices to ensure services are delivered effectively and inclusively.
- Additionally, administrators highlighted the need for stronger parental understanding, as some families assume the program will support English acquisition. One administrator stressed that parents are responsible for their child’s English development and may need additional support. Another emphasized the importance of providing an overarching message about what the program can and cannot do.

“ We need some alignment between the language office and special education office so all on same page and provide clarity to schools regarding students in immersion program that need services or screened. We need special educators who can provide support spanish. ”

“ We have way too many students that are unable to read, write or understand the language and barely any paraeducators available to work with students that need support. ”

“ The classroom sizes are too large for a language learning program. The students in the class are language learners and would benefit from either a smaller class size or an additional adult in the classroom. ”

“ Students are multilingual learners much like EML students, and would greatly benefit from some of the support services provided to EMLs to help close learning gaps. ”

5

Key Theme: Gaps in Assessing and Monitoring Student Progress in Spanish

- There was no standardized assessment to measure students' literacy proficiency and monitor progress in Spanish. Some schools chose to administer DIBELS to students in Grades 3–5, even though it was not required, and teachers often created their own vocabulary assessments. With the implementation of the new Spanish curriculum, there was no district-level assessment for the Evidence of Learning (EOL) framework, leaving immersion schools without this measure (at the time). Staff expressed a need for more guidance and consistency across schools regarding assessments. It was also mentioned that Avant STAMP, a commercially available language proficiency test, was used once a few years ago.

I feel that every school does the assessments differently and there is not as much consistency as there should be. Would love better direction.

Assessing students' literacy progress in the target language is challenging, as most district and external assessments are in English.

We need clearer guidance on locating specific targets measured in each unit and clarification on required district assessments to measure evidence of learning in the target language, as there is currently no assessment in place this year.

There is no Evidence of Learning for us at the district level.

We should have more to measure language acquisition (in Spanish).



Spanish Immersion Challenges and Needs

6 Key Theme: Challenges balancing immersion and non-immersion portions of an elementary school.

- School administrators acknowledge the challenge of managing the immersion and non-immersion programs within the school. The principal of one school emphasized the goal of minimizing division between the immersion program and the non-immersion portion of the school, noting that considerable effort has gone into achieving this balance. Administrators must consider the differing needs of parents and make decisions that are equitable for all students, such as how resources are allocated for celebrations and events. In another school, non-immersion students are offered exposure to Spanish on a rotating basis, similar to specials like art or P.E.

7 Key Theme: Expansion of Immersion Team Leader Position

- The program Team Leader is considered essential, with one principal noting “a lot of work goes into it and that position should be full-time.” In fact, all three principals interviewed gave a recommendation for the expansion of the coordinator role such as “the team leader does not get a stipend but is part of the Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) and makes decisions for half of the school so should be official and get payment’ and team leaders should be at least 11 months, or summer days, because they have responsibilities in the summer while families are being invited into the program or at least more days such as counselors, staff development teachers, and media specialists.

Other Notable Feedback of Interest

- In a school with only one class per grade level, the coordinator expressed a desire to add another class per grade level. Having only one class limits students’ social and emotional development, as they remain with the same classmates each year and may struggle to develop social skills such as adapting to new personalities, building friendships, and managing social interactions. This also intensifies conflicts. Adding another class would give students broader peer interactions, allow teachers to collaborate with a grade-level partner, and increase opportunities for students on waiting lists to enroll.
- Adjusting the January enrollment cut-off (currently extended past the school start to fill waitlist vacancies) was suggested to prevent students from starting the year late and behind.



Chinese Immersion Successes

The following theme regarding the successes of the Chinese Immersion program, emerged from staff interviews (Immersion Team Leaders and a Principal) and teacher open-ended responses incorporated for theme development and context since there were too few to report separately.

Theme: Dedicated and Hard Working Staff and Other Successes

Staff in the Chinese immersion program were overall praised as being dedicated, hardworking, and collaborate well with their grade-level teams. It was pointed out that students have performed well in math for many years and demonstrate strong listening comprehension and everyday language skills. Several former students have also kept in touch, sharing that they continued studying the language after graduation and returning to express appreciation for the program while sharing their college and career accomplishments. They also remarked that parents, administrators, and the community are supportive and engaged, and that the consistently long waitlist reflects the program's ongoing popularity. Staff from one school noted that they are fortunate to have a paraeducator who speaks Mandarin and emphasized that the school has done a good job offering programs and events, such as a large Lunar New Year celebration, that help families feel included and connected to the school community.. They further highlighted that a benefit of the program is that it promotes multilingualism and sends a positive message to all, including non-immersion students, about the value of speaking another language. Finally, because of its partial immersion structure, immersion students are in class with non-immersion students beyond specials, recess, and lunch: ELA classes are regrouped and mixed between immersion and non-immersion students in one school, and Grade 4 and 5 students in Enriched Literacy Class (ELC) are mixed between immersion and non-immersion in the other school.



Chinese Immersion Challenges and Needs

The following themes related to challenges and needs in the Chinese Immersion Program that emerged from staff interviews (Immersion Team Leaders and a Principal) and teacher open-ended responses incorporated for theme development and context since there were too few to report separately.

1 **Key Theme: Gaps in Assessing and Monitoring Student Progress in Chinese**

- Staff highlighted the lack of a systematic tool to measure student progress in Chinese language proficiency and the absence of clearly communicated goals for language attainment. Because Chinese is not taught as a direct subject but rather used to teach math and science, there are no benchmarks or standardized data available to share with parents, who often ask about their child's language development, and some of whom hold high expectations for progress. Some teachers reportedly created their own measures to help gauge and communicate progress in attaining the language. At the same time, one staff member raised concern that adding formal language assessments could place additional burden on teachers, especially given that language instruction is not explicitly part of the program and time is limited to do so under the current structure.

2 **Key Theme: Challenges with Translated Math, Science, and Social Studies Materials**

- The availability of instructional resources in Chinese were limited. Few, if any, materials were available for Science and Social Studies, which placed the burden on teachers who are expected to instruct students in Chinese. Additionally, although Eureka Math was translated, staff reported that the translations were often poor and difficult to use, even if they have improved compared to prior years. Incorrect language also created confusion among students trying to learn the academic concepts for math. This again places the burden on teachers, who lack the time to continually translate and correct materials. Further, inconsistencies can arise in how lessons are translated and delivered. As pointed out by staff, if the goal is to teach these subjects in Mandarin, more high-quality resources in the target language are essential.

3 **Key Theme: Student Support Needed**

- Staff explained that, although the need for special education support during Chinese instruction is limited, there is no special education teacher available to provide it in Chinese. They also noted that students may need to be pulled from the already limited Chinese instruction to receive support in English language arts. One staff member noted that their school is fortunate to have a paraeducator who speaks Mandarin and can support immersion students across all grade levels. However, questions were raised about whether immersion is the most appropriate program for students reading below grade level and struggling. It was noted that placement decisions do not rest with the school. Further, whether the program fully benefits students when the school is already over capacity and when some students either do not plan to continue immersion in middle school. Elsewhere, concern was raised about the lack of classroom support, particularly in Kindergarten, despite having a consistently large class size of 24 students (the max for a Kindergarten immersion class), while non-immersion classes with much smaller enrollments continue to receive assistance.



4

Key Theme: Helping Students Develop Proficiency in Chinese

- Staff reported that developing proficiency in Chinese through math and science instruction alone is a significant challenge and that proficiency is unrealistic given the limited instructional time in Chinese and the absence of a language arts component. It was shared that some parents have expressed concerns that their children are not being sufficiently enriched and that families do not always fully understand that the program is not designed to develop fluency in Chinese, but rather to teach math and science through Chinese. While incorporating some daily direct language instruction has been suggested to the programs, staff noted that time is greatly limited, opportunities for repetitive practice and vocabulary development are scarce, and students must switch classrooms creating a definitive end time to their Chinese instructional time. In one school, teachers attempted to at least include roughly 10 minutes of English language instruction each day (one hour a week); however, without a textbook or instructional guide, implementation is inconsistent.

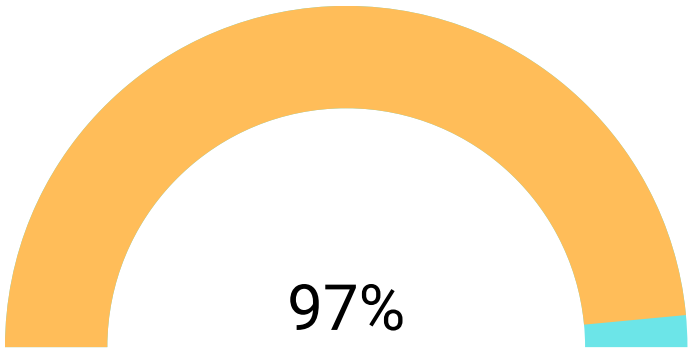
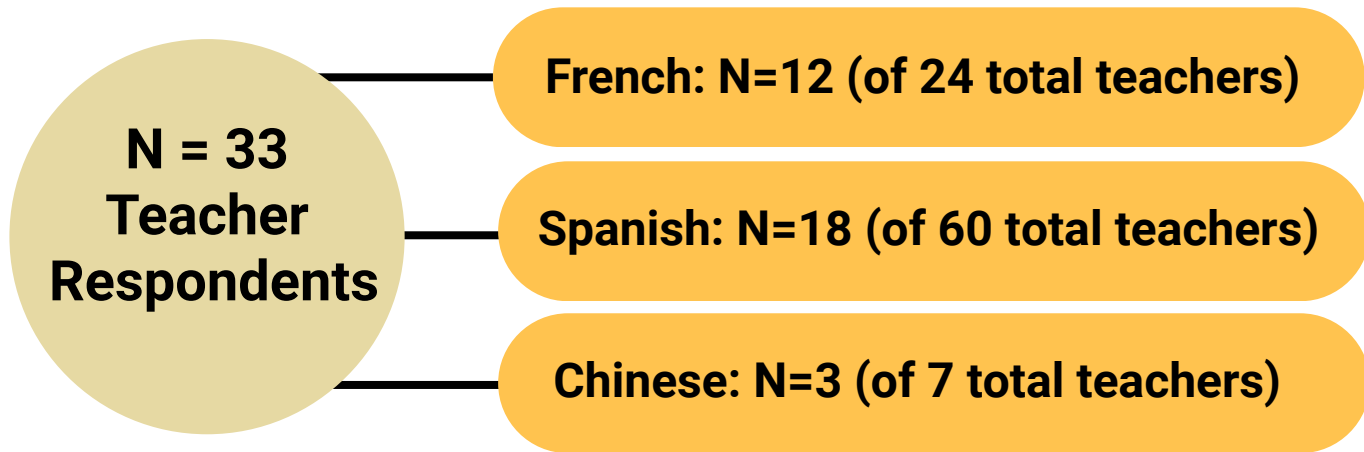
Other Notable Feedback of Interest

- Concerns were raised about the lack of Compacted Math (Math 4/5 or 5/6) offered in Chinese at the upper grades; rather this accelerate math course was only offered in English to qualifying students. Staff explained that the school does not have the staffing to provide both advanced and on-level math in the target language.
- For one school, transportation was reportedly an issue for many parents. Parents noted they must balance the decision between enrolling their child in the immersion program and enduring long bus rides.



Results: Teacher Survey

Characteristics of Teacher Respondents



Almost all French and Spanish Immersion Teacher Respondents reported they speak in their target language 90-100% of the time



Findings

Each school's language immersion program has 1-2 teachers per grade, and for the Chinese Partial immersion program, a teacher frequently spans two grade levels resulting in only seven total teachers across the two schools. A total of 33 immersion teachers responded to the survey.

Among the teacher respondents, 55% had experience teaching immersion outside of MCPS, and almost one-third (30%) had more than 10 years experience with teaching immersion at MCPS.

When asked how often they spoke the target language in their classrooms, nearly all French and Spanish immersion teachers reported speaking the target language 90-100% of the time. The sample size for the Chinese immersion teachers was too small to report.

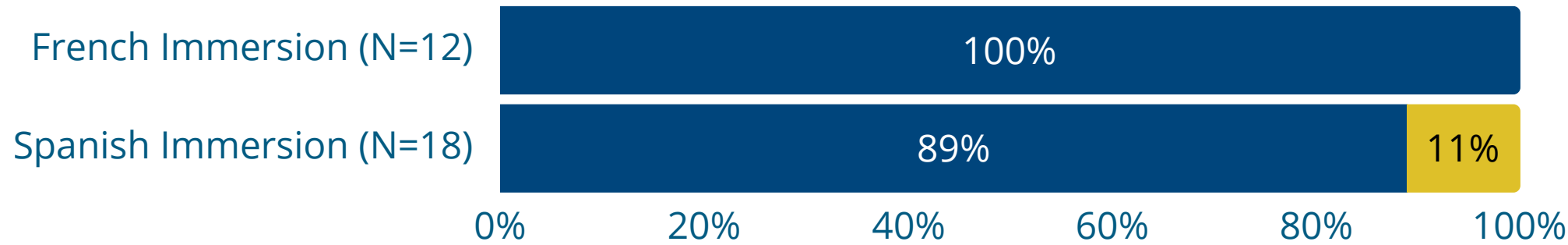


Results: Immersion Teacher Survey

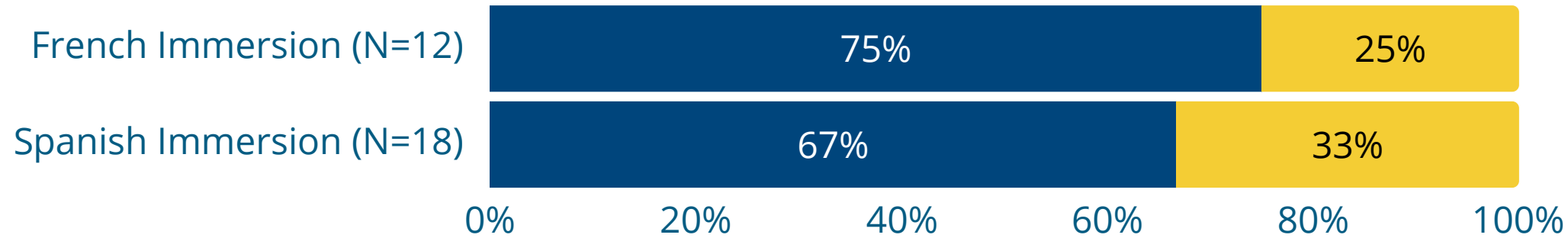
Preparation and Support

● Strongly Agree/Agree ● Strongly Disagree/Disagree

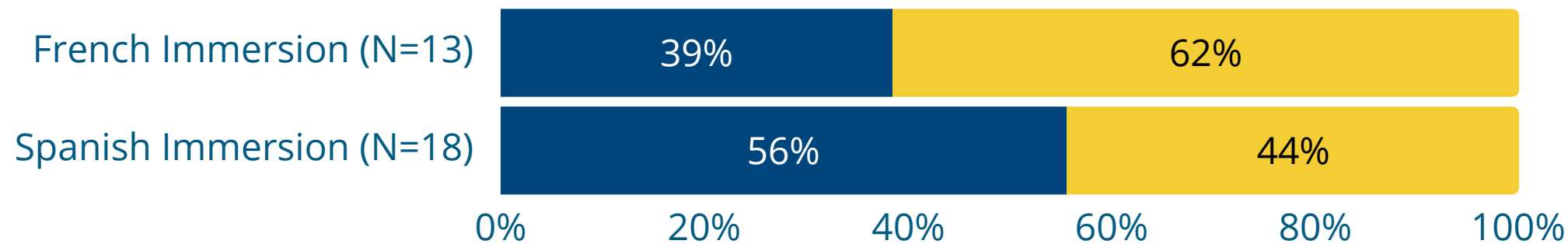
I am provided with adequate support from school staff with the implementation of the immersion program, as needed.



The professional learning I received has adequately prepared me to instruct in the immersion program.



I am provided with adequate support from district-level staff with the implementation of the immersion program, as needed.



Findings

There was strong agreement among the 12 French and 18 Spanish immersion teachers that they received adequate support from school staff for implementing the immersion program. All French immersion teachers and 89% of Spanish immersion teachers agreed or strongly agreed, including 36% of French teachers and 50% of Spanish teachers who strongly agreed.

Regarding professional learning, 75% of French immersion teachers agreed or strongly agreed that it adequately prepared them to teach in the program (18% strongly agreed). Furthermore, 67% of Spanish immersion teachers had a combined agreement (33% strongly agreed).

Support from district-level staff was rated lower. Only 39% of French immersion teachers agreed they received adequate support, and none strongly agreed. Among Spanish immersion teachers, 56% agreed or strongly agreed, with 33% strongly agreeing.

Note: The results of the Chinese immersion survey are not shown due to the low sample size and number of teachers responding to the survey.

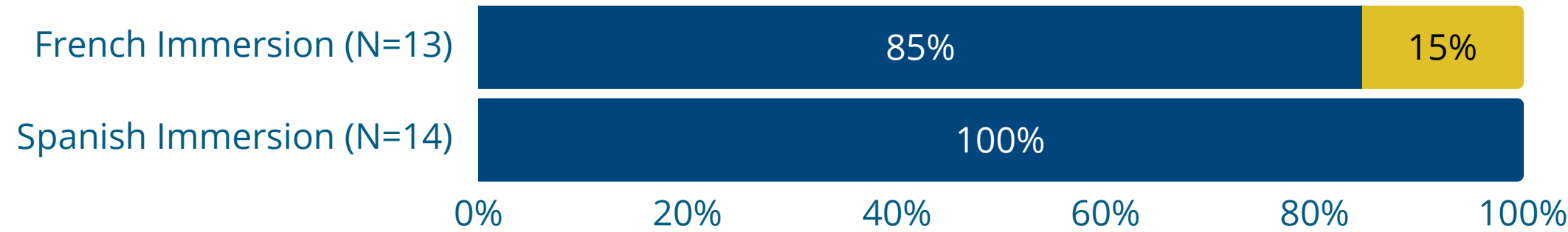


Results: Immersion Teacher Survey

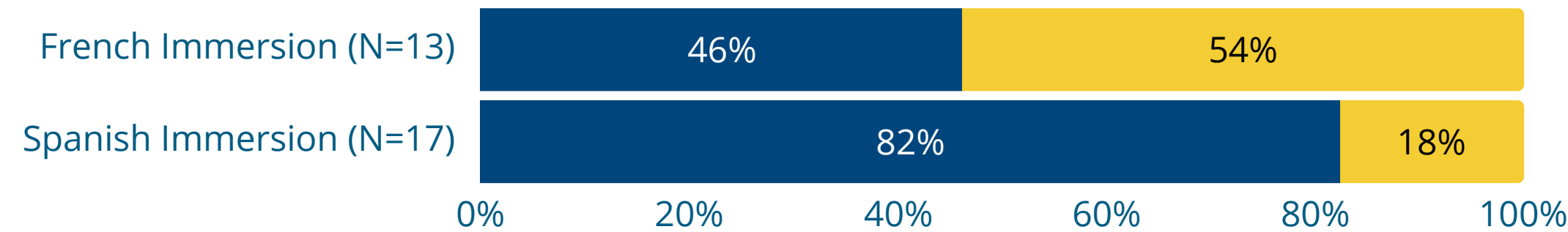
Satisfaction with Instructional Materials

● Very/Somewhat Satisfied ● Very/Somewhat Dissatisfied

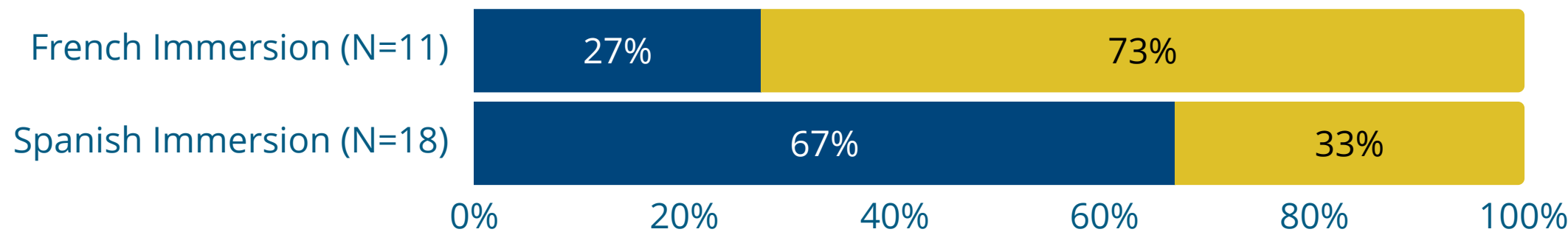
Instructional materials in the target language for Math.



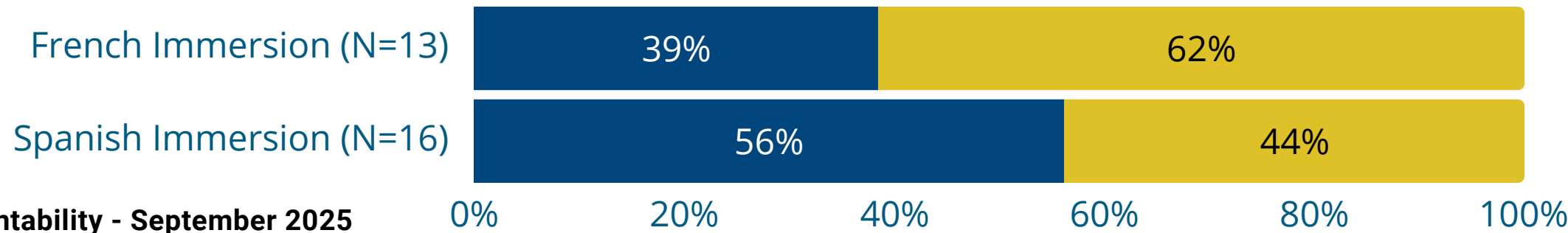
Instructional materials in the target language for Language Arts.



Instructional materials in the target language for Social Studies.



Instructional materials in the target language for Science.



Findings

Most of the 13 French and 14 Spanish immersion teachers were very or somewhat satisfied with the instructional materials provided in the target language for math. All 14 Spanish immersion teachers (100%) reported satisfaction, compared with 85% of French immersion teachers. Notably, 64% of Spanish teachers were very satisfied, while only 8% of French teachers reported the same.

For Language Arts, 82% of Spanish immersion teachers were very or somewhat satisfied with the instructional materials, compared to only 46% of French immersion teachers.

Satisfaction was lower for Social Studies and Science. Among Spanish immersion teachers, 67% were satisfied with Social Studies materials and 56% with Science materials. In contrast, only 27% of French Immersion teachers were satisfied with Social Studies and 39% with Science instructional materials, with none reporting they were very satisfied with either subject.

The results of the Chinese immersion survey are not shown due to the low sample size and number of teachers responding to the survey.

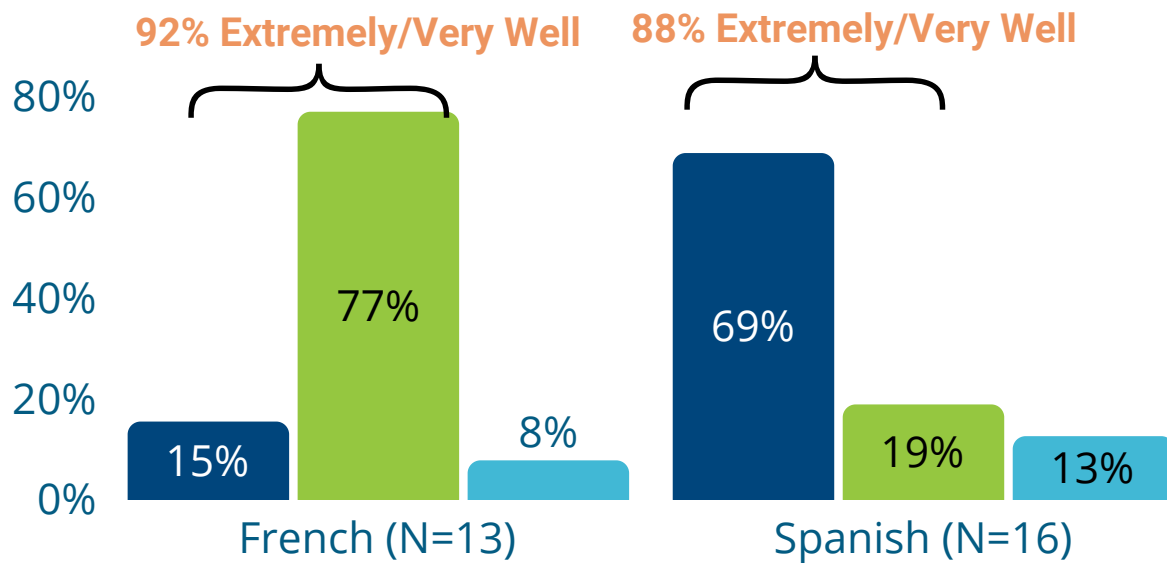


Results: Immersion Teacher Survey

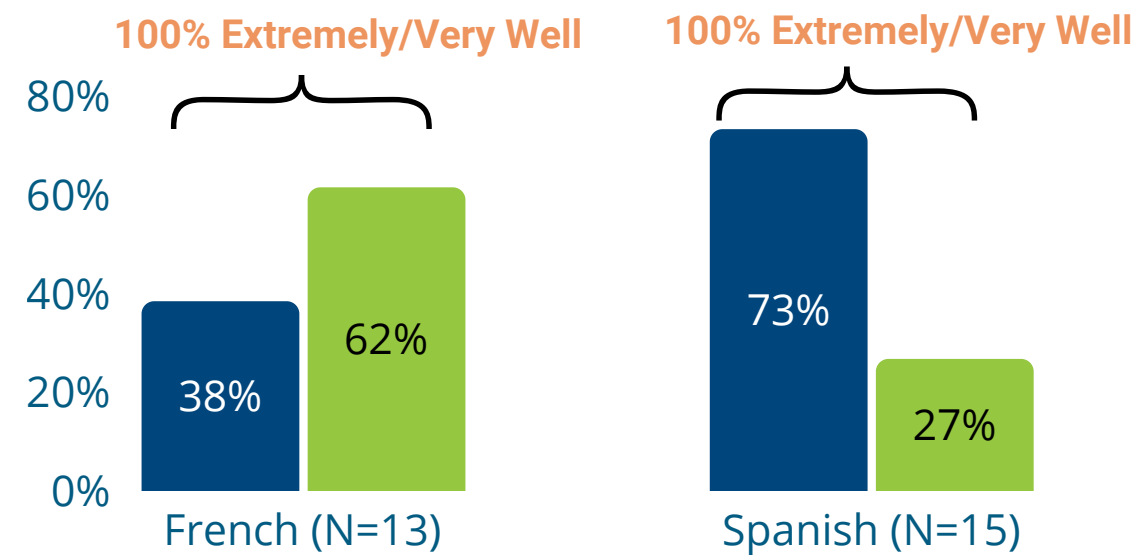
Implementing and Assessing in Target Language

● Extremely Well ● Very Well ● Not Very Well ● Not Very Well at All

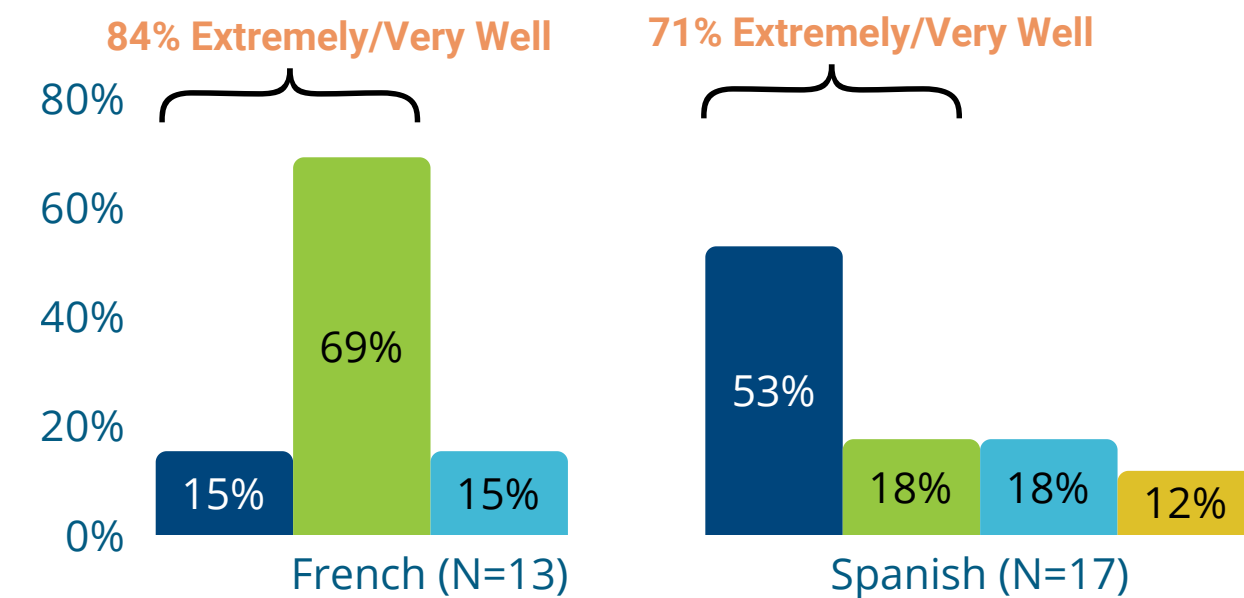
Implementation of the language arts curriculum in the target language.



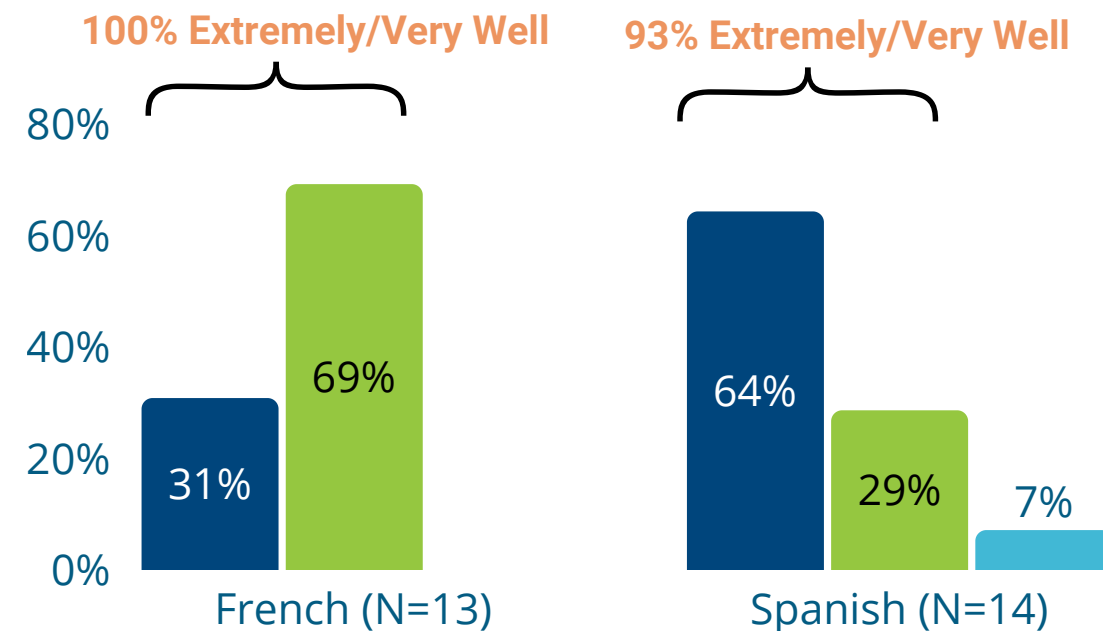
Implementation of the math curriculum in the target language.



Assessing students' literacy progress in the target language.



Assessing students' math progress in the target language.



Findings

Most teachers in the French and Spanish immersion programs reported that they were able to implement the curricula extremely well or very well in language arts (92% in French and 88% in Spanish) and particularly for math, where all teachers rated implementation as going extremely or very well. It is notable that for language arts, 15% of French immersion teachers indicated extremely well compared to 69% of Spanish immersion teachers. Similarly, for math, 38% of French immersion teachers indicated extremely well compared to 73% of Spanish immersion teachers.

Assessing students' literacy progress in the target language was slightly lower in both groups. Among French immersion teachers, 84% gave high marks for assessing literacy progress, with 15% indicating extremely well. Among Spanish immersion teachers, 71% gave high marks, with 53% indicating extremely well.

All French immersion teachers (100%), and 93% of Spanish immersion teachers reported that they could assess students' math progress extremely or very well. For French teachers, 31% indicated extremely well, while for Spanish teachers, 64% did so.

The results of the Chinese immersion survey are not shown due to the low sample size and number of teachers responding to the survey.



Results: Immersion Teacher Survey

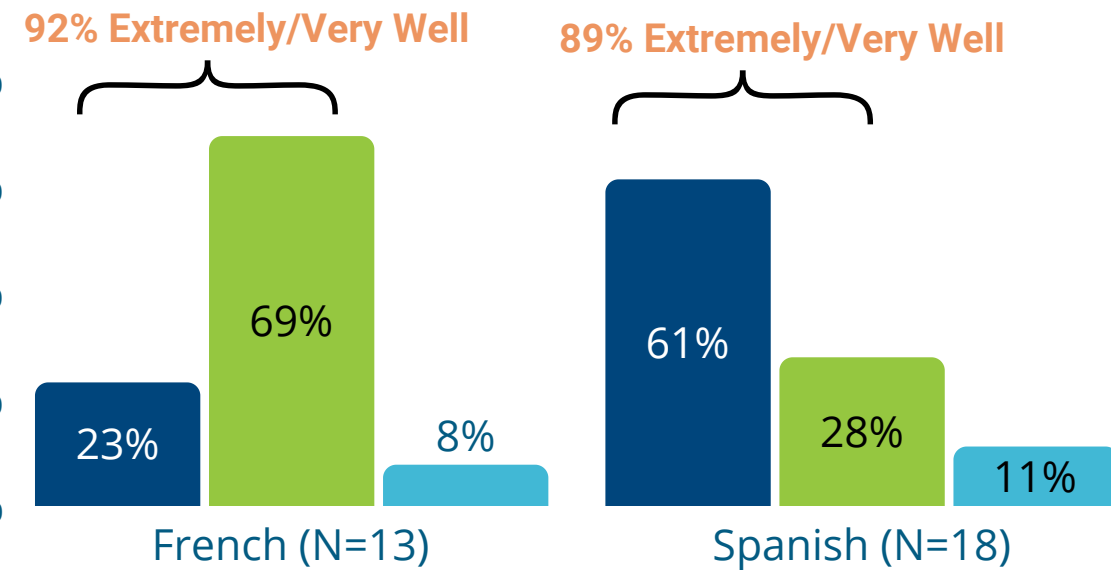
Reviewing Data, Supporting Students, and Overall Satisfaction



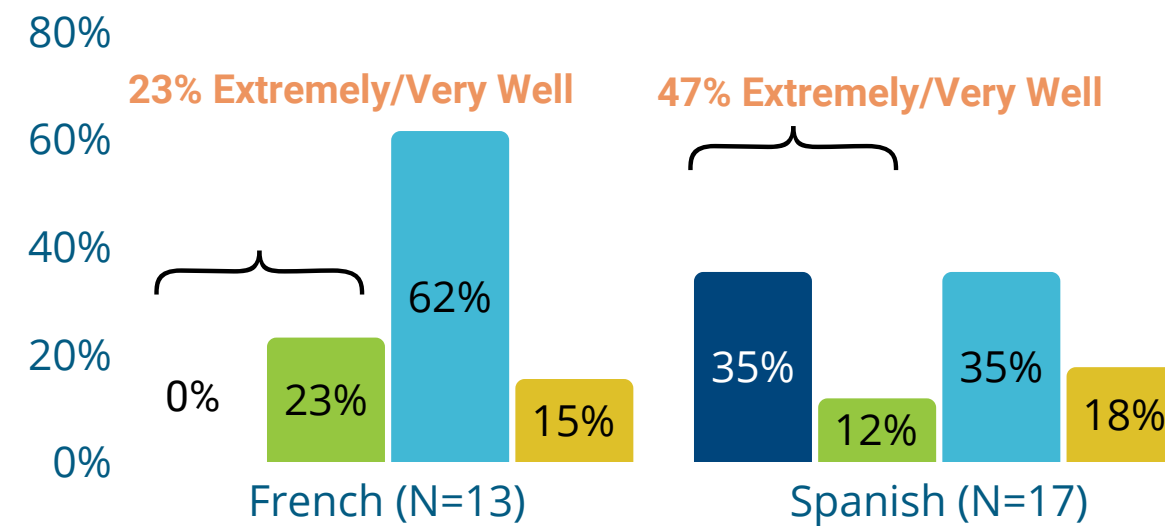
Findings

● Extremely Well ● Very Well ● Not Very Well ● Not Very Well at All

Regularly reviewing student data to plan for instruction.

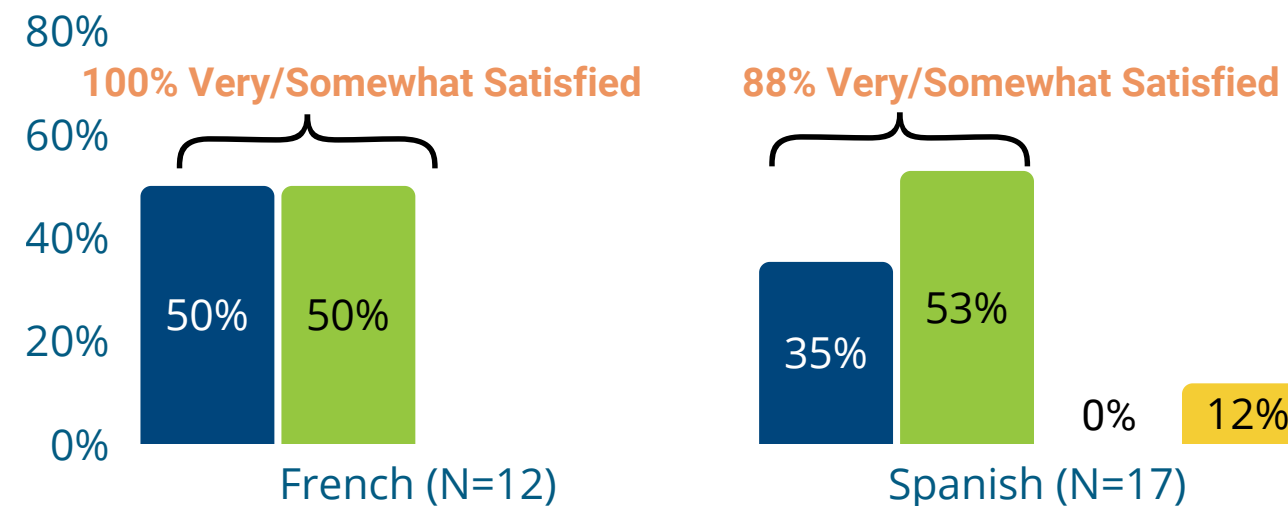


Students receiving support services as needed.



Overall Satisfaction

● Very Satisfied ● Somewhat Satisfied ● Somewhat Dissatisfied ● Very Dissatisfied



Most teachers in the French and Spanish Immersion programs reported that they were able to regularly review student data to plan for instruction (92% among French immersion and 89% among Spanish immersion). It is notable that 23% of French immersion teachers indicated extremely well compared to 61% of Spanish immersion teachers.

In contrast, fewer teachers felt that students received support services, as needed. Only 23% of French immersion teachers indicated this was going very well (none indicated extremely well). For Spanish, 47% said it was going extremely or very well, with 35% indicating extremely well.

The vast majority of teachers were somewhat or very satisfied with the immersion program overall. Among French immersion teachers, 50% indicated they were very satisfied and 50% somewhat satisfied. Among Spanish teachers, 35% indicated very satisfied and 53% somewhat satisfied, with 12% reported they were very dissatisfied.



Results: Parent Survey

Parent Respondent Characteristics

N=612 Parents who Responded to the Survey

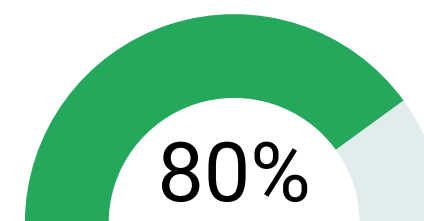
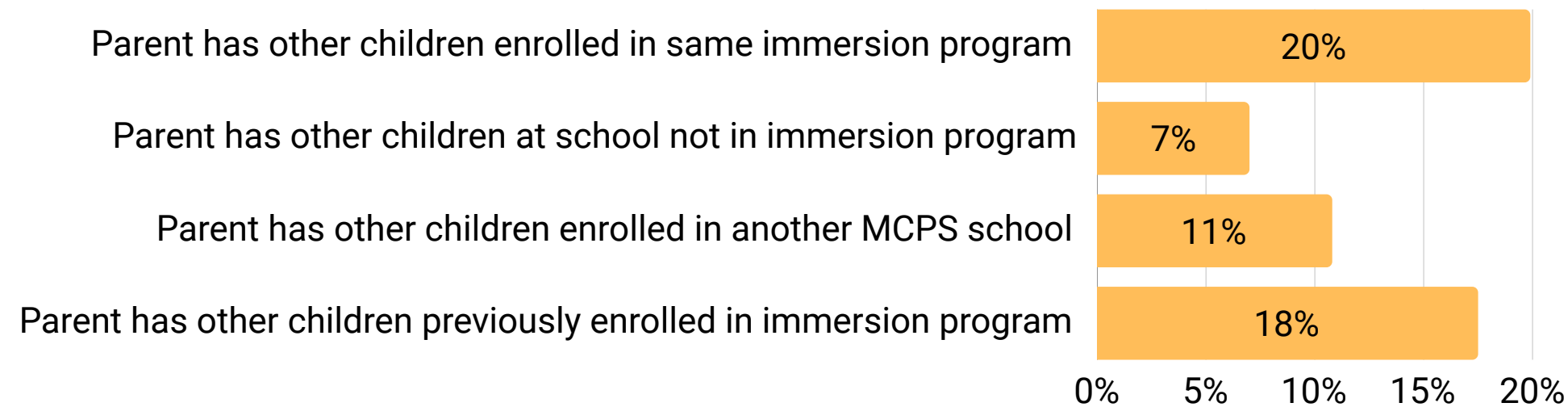
- French Immersion: n=236 (39%)
- Spanish Immersion: n=273 (45%)
- Chinese Immersion: n=101 (16%)

Race/Ethnicity of Parents who Responded

Race/Ethnicity	Total (N=585)	French Immersion (N=224)	Spanish Immersion (N=267)	Chinese Immersion (N=92)
Asian	13%	7%	6%	46%
Black or African American	17%	18%	19%	12%
Hispanic/Latino	10%	6%	15%	2%
Two or More Races	15%	13%	17%	12%
White	42%	52%	40%	26%
Other	3%	4%	2%	2%

The following pages address Evaluation Q3: What are the perceptions and experiences among parents/guardians of elementary children who attend One-Way Immersion programs?

Enrollment of Other Children (N=612)



Child was enrolled in Immersion Program Last Year (2023–2024)

Findings

Among the 612 parents who responded to the survey, 39% had a child in the French immersion program, 45% in the Spanish, and 16% in the Chinese. Additionally, 20% had another child enrolled in the same program, and an additional 18% had other children previously enrolled. Furthermore, 80% had a child enrolled in an immersion program the prior year. Most of the parents who responded and had students in the French immersion and Spanish immersion programs were self-identified as White with 52% and 40% respectively. However, most of the parents who responded and had students in the Chinese program were self-identified as Asian (46%) followed by White (26%). Among the total responding, 17% were Black or African American (lower among Chinese immersion), and 10% were Hispanic/Latino (higher among Spanish immersion).



Results: Parent Survey

Languages Spoken at Home

Primary Language at Home	French Immersion (N=235)	Spanish Immersion (N=273)	Chinese Immersion (N=99)
English	94%	93%	84%
French	4%	-	-
Mandarin	<1%	-	13%
Spanish	2%	5%	2%
Other	<1%	<1%	<1%

Other Languages at Home	French Immersion (N=235)	Spanish Immersion (N=273)	Chinese Immersion (N=99)
English	15%	19%	19%
French	21%	2%	-
Mandarin	2%	1%	20%
Spanish	8%	28%	11%
Other	13%	13%	18%



Findings

Most parents reported that English was the primary language spoken at home: 94% among those whose child was enrolled in the French immersion program, 94% among Spanish immersion, and 84% among Chinese immersion.

Among those in the French immersion program, 25% spoke French at home: 4% reported that French was the primary language spoken at home and 21% reported that French was an additional language spoken at home. An additional 13% reported an other language was spoken at home.

Similarly, among those in Spanish immersion, 33% spoke Spanish at home: 5% reported that Spanish was the primary language at home and 28% reported that Spanish was an additional language spoken at home. An additional 13% reported an other language was spoken at home.

Among those in Chinese immersion, 33% spoke Chinese at home: 13% reported that Mandarin was the primary language spoken at home and 20% reported that Mandarin was an additional language spoken at home. An additional 18% reported an other language was spoken at home.



Results: Parent Survey

Description of Survey Sample and Grade Levels of Students Enrolled

Parent Respondents:
responding while thinking of
oldest enrolled child (N=612)

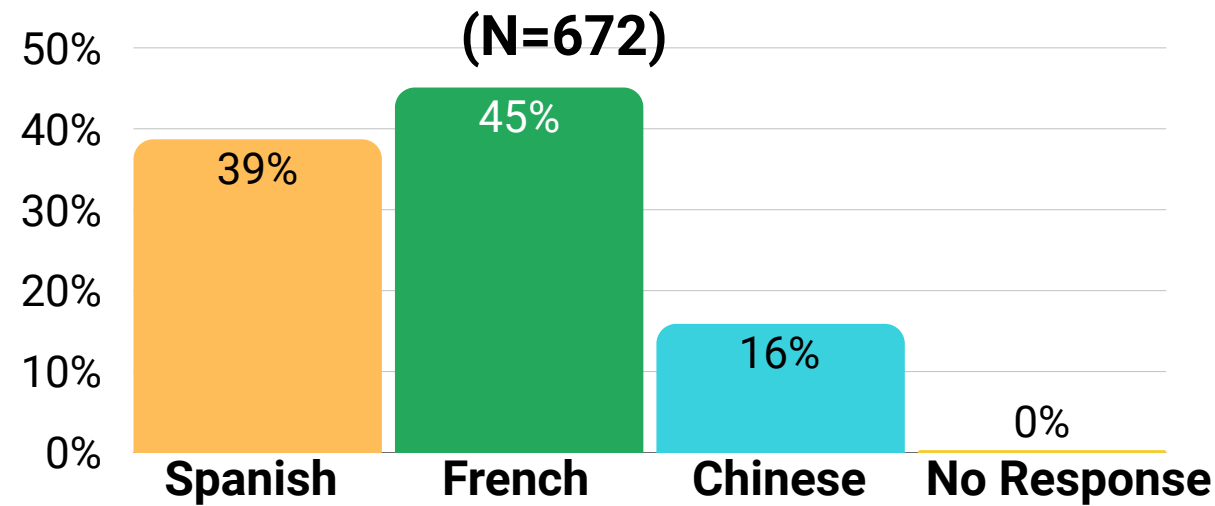


Parent Respondents:
responding to some questions again
while thinking of youngest child (N=60)

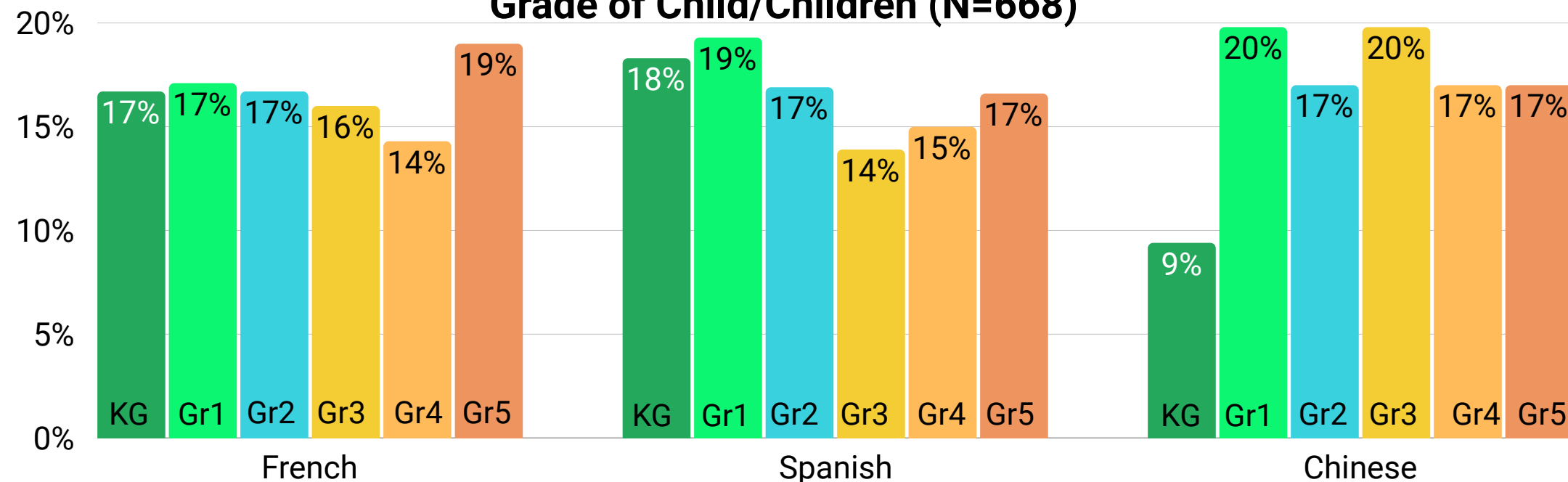


Total respondents
including both
children N=672

Immersion Program of Child(ren)



Grade of Child/Children (N=668)



Note: Four respondents are not reflected in the N because of missing responses.



Findings

Parents responding to the survey (N=612) were asked to think of their oldest enrolled child when responding to questions about the immersion Program. If a parent had more than one child enrolled, they were given the opportunity to answer some of the questions again while thinking about their youngest child; 60 parents did so for a total of 672.

The grade level of the enrolled students were distributed across all grades ranging from 14%–19% in the French and Spanish immersion Programs, and 9%–20% in the Chinese immersion Program.

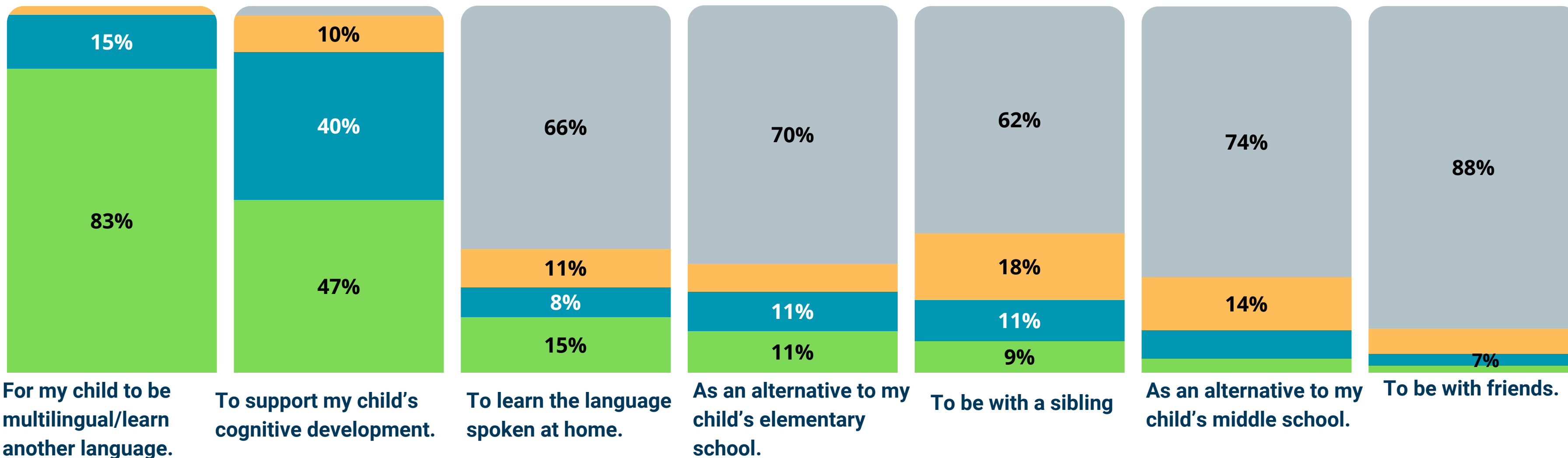


Results: Parent Survey

Reasons Given for Enrolling Child in an Immersion Program

N = 665 This includes parents who responded for a second enrolled younger sibling.

Essential Very Important Somewhat Important Not Important



Other Reasons for Enrolling (10%) include: Communicate with other family/grandparents, Connect to heritage/culture, Provide a challenge/rigor, Cultural appreciation and world perspective, Other responses



Findings

By far, the top reason among parents for enrolling their student in the immersion program was “for my child to be multilingual,” with 83% rating it as essential and another 15% as very important. This was followed by “to support my child’s cognitive development,” with 47% rating it essential and 40% very important. “To be with a sibling” was rated somewhat important by 18%, and essential or very important by 20%. Similarly, 14% reported “as an alternative to my child’s middle school” as somewhat important, and 12% rated it essential or very important. For “as an alternative to my child’s elementary school,” 8% considered it somewhat important, while 22% rated it essential or very important.



Results: Parent Survey

Application Experience

Currently Enrolled in French Immersion (N=236)

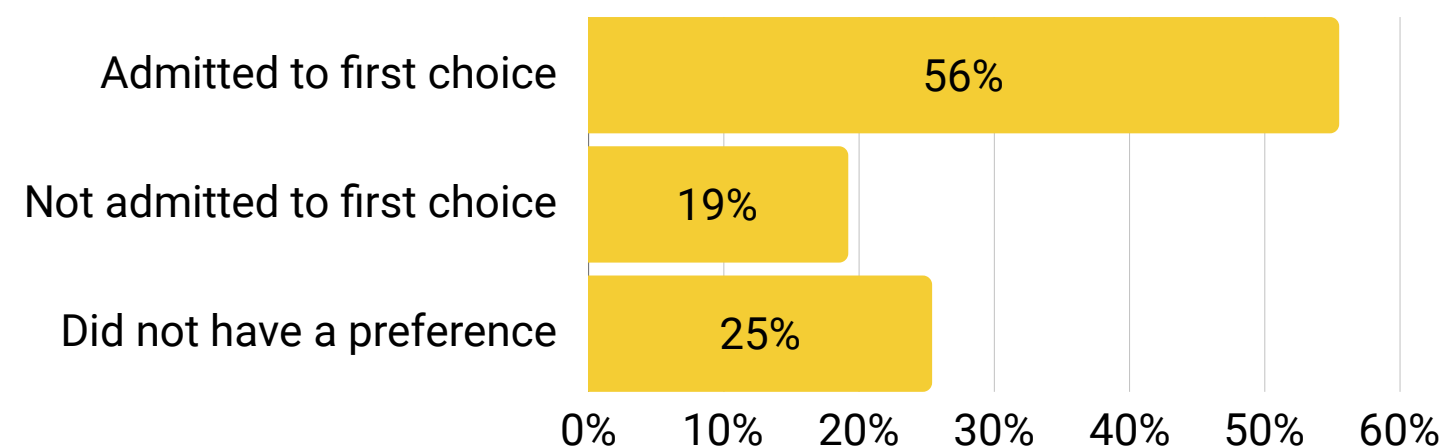
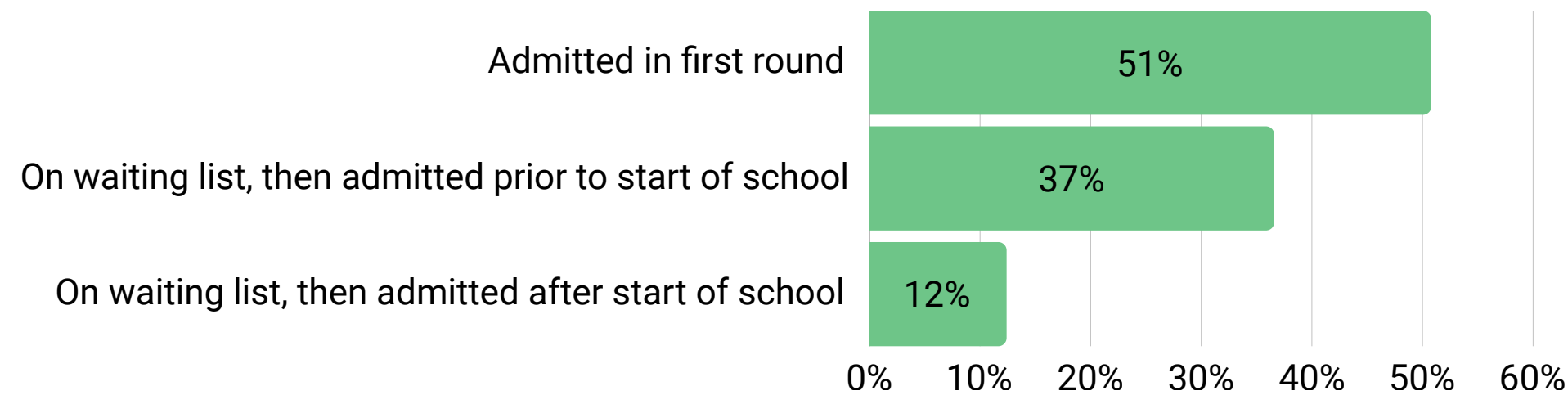
- 26% (n=62) also applied for Chinese
- 43% (n=101) also applied for Spanish
- 19% (n=45) applied for all three languages

Currently Enrolled in Spanish Immersion (N=273)

- 16% (n=44) also applied for Chinese
- 33% (n=89) also applied for French
- 13% (n=34) applied for all three languages

Currently Enrolled in Chinese Immersion (N=101)

- 20% (n=20) also applied for Spanish
- 20% (n=20) also applied for French
- 17% (n=17) applied for all three languages.



Findings

Among parents who responded and whose child was enrolled in an immersion program, many applied for other county immersion programs as well.

Among the parents whose child or children were enrolled in the French immersion program, 43% (n=101) also applied for Spanish, 26% (n=62) also applied for Chinese, and 19% (n=45) applied for all three programs.

Among the parents of students in the Spanish immersion program, one-third (n=89) also applied for French, 16% (n=44) also applied for Chinese, and 13% (n=34) applied for all three programs.

Finally, among those in the Chinese immersion program, one-fifth (n=20) also applied for Spanish, one-fifth (n=20) also applied for French, and 17% (n=17) applied for all three programs.

Approximately one-half (51%) of parents reported their child was admitted in the first round, with another 37% getting initially put on a wait list but being admitted prior to the start of school; 12% were admitted after school.

Just over half (56%) indicated their child was admitted to their first choice and one-fourth reported they did not have a preference of program.

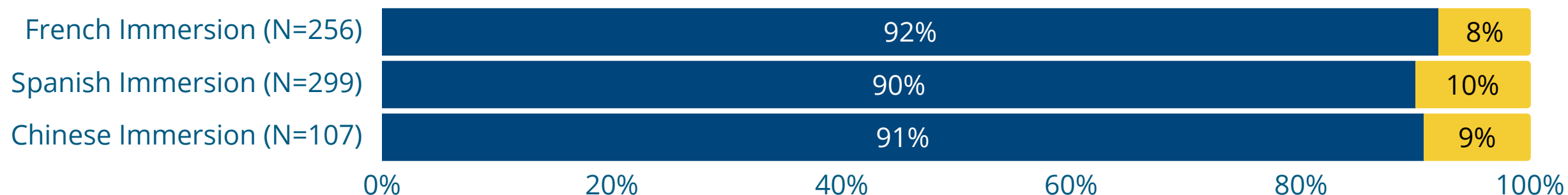


Results: Parent Survey

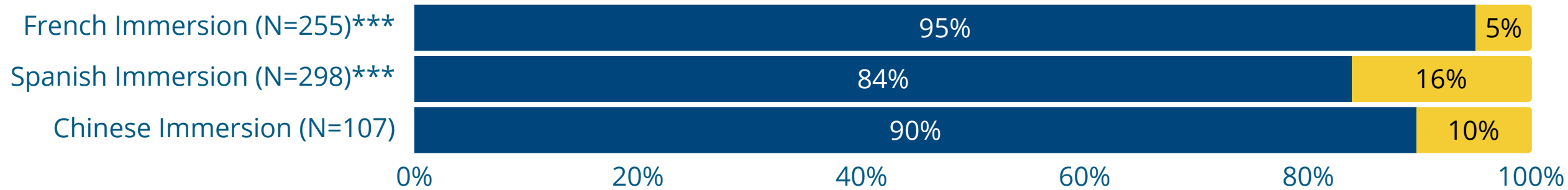
Perspectives on Provided Information and Resources

● Strongly Agree/Agree ● Strongly Disagree/Disagree

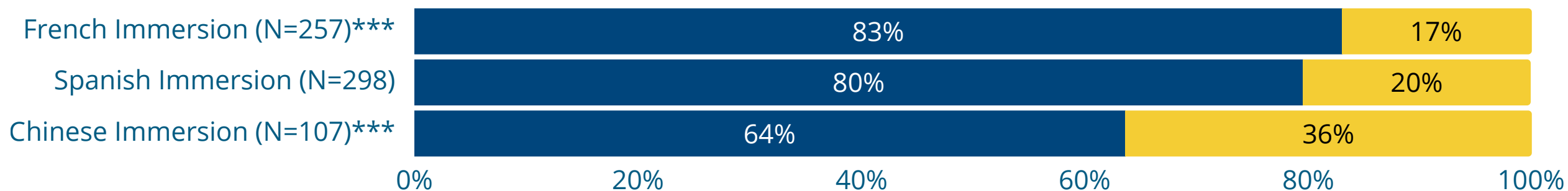
I am provided with information about my child's schedule that I understand.



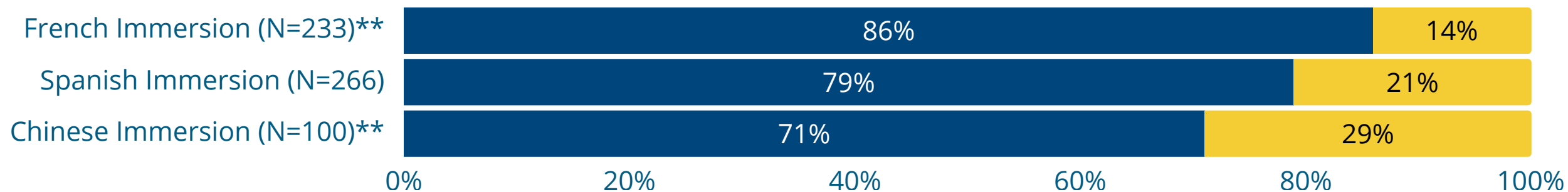
If I have questions about the program, I know where to go or whom to ask.



I am provided with resources on how to support my child's learning.



MCPS does a good job providing parents with resources or opportunities to learn about the OWI program.



Statistical significance: *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001



Findings

Overall, the survey results indicated that the majority of parents felt well-supported with the information and resources they received, particularly regarding their child's schedule and knowing who to contact.

A high percentage of parents in all three programs felt well-informed about their child's schedule. Parents of students in French immersion reported the highest rate of agreement at 92%, followed closely by Chinese immersion at 91%, and Spanish immersion at 90%.

When it came to knowing who to contact with questions, parents in French immersion again showed the highest agreement at 95%, which was significantly higher. This was followed by Chinese immersion at 90% and Spanish immersion at 84% (significantly lower).

Parents in the French immersion (83%) and Spanish immersion (80%) programs largely agreed they received resources to support their child's learning. This rate was significantly higher for parents in the French immersion program and lower for parents of students in the Chinese immersion program (64%).

Overall, parents in the French immersion program were the highest in agreeing that MCPS does a good job providing resources, with a significantly higher percentage (86%) agreeing or strongly agreeing. This was followed by Spanish immersion at 79% and Chinese immersion at 71% (significantly lower).

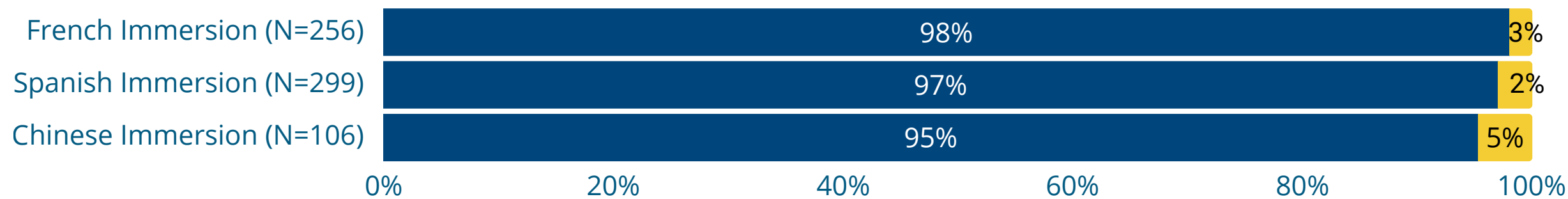


Results: Parent Survey

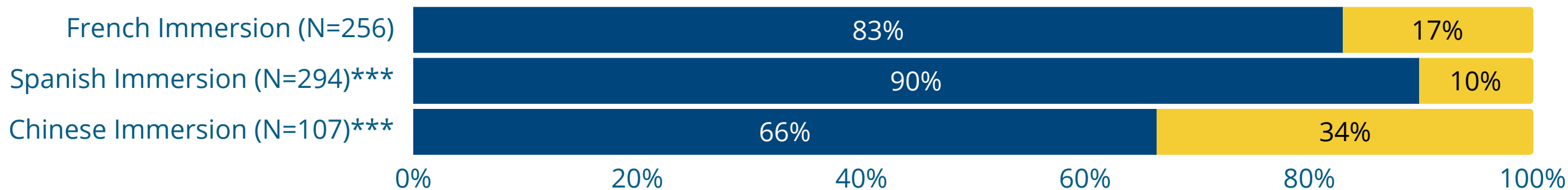
Perspectives on Communication, Enjoyment, and Home Language Use

● Strongly Agree/Agree ● Strongly Disagree/Disagree

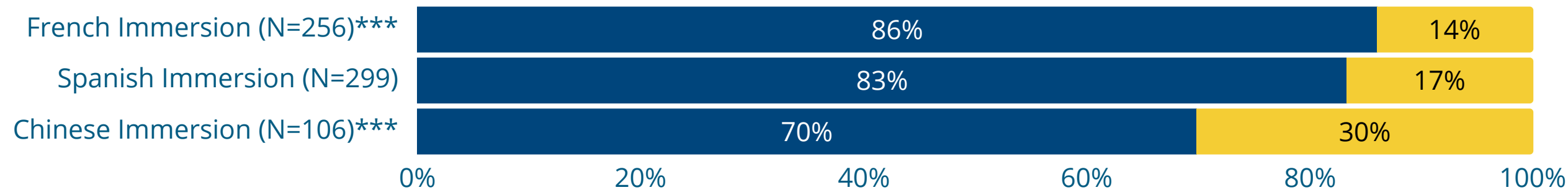
My student enjoys being enrolled in the immersion program.



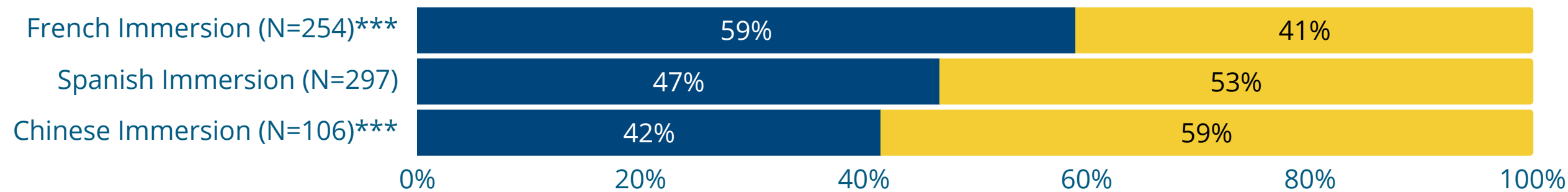
My child is frequently sent home with classwork or resources to practice what they are learning.



I receive adequate communication about my child's academic progress in the immersion program.



At home, my student frequently speaks in the target language.



Statistical significance: *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001



Findings

The vast majority of parents across all programs reported their students enjoy being in the immersion program. A combined 95% or more of parents in each program either agreed or strongly agreed.

There was a significantly greater percentage of agreement among parents of students in Spanish immersion (90%) that their child was sent home with practice materials, while the percentage for Chinese immersion (66%) was significantly lower. French immersion was 83%.

The percentage of parents who strongly agreed or agreed they received adequate communication about their child's academic progress varied significantly by program. A significantly greater percentage of agreement was reported by French Immersion (86%) parents, while the percentage for Chinese Immersion (70%) was significantly lower. Spanish Immersion agreement was 83%.

Finally, the percentage of parents who strongly agreed or agreed their child frequently speaks the target language at home varied significantly by program but were all below 60%. A significantly greater percentage of agreement was reported by parents of French Immersion students (59%), while the percentage for Chinese Immersion (42%) was significantly lower. Spanish Immersion agreement was 47%.

It is worth noting that responses may vary by individual schools.



Results: Parent Survey

Overall Satisfaction, Recommendation, and Continuation to Middle School



Findings

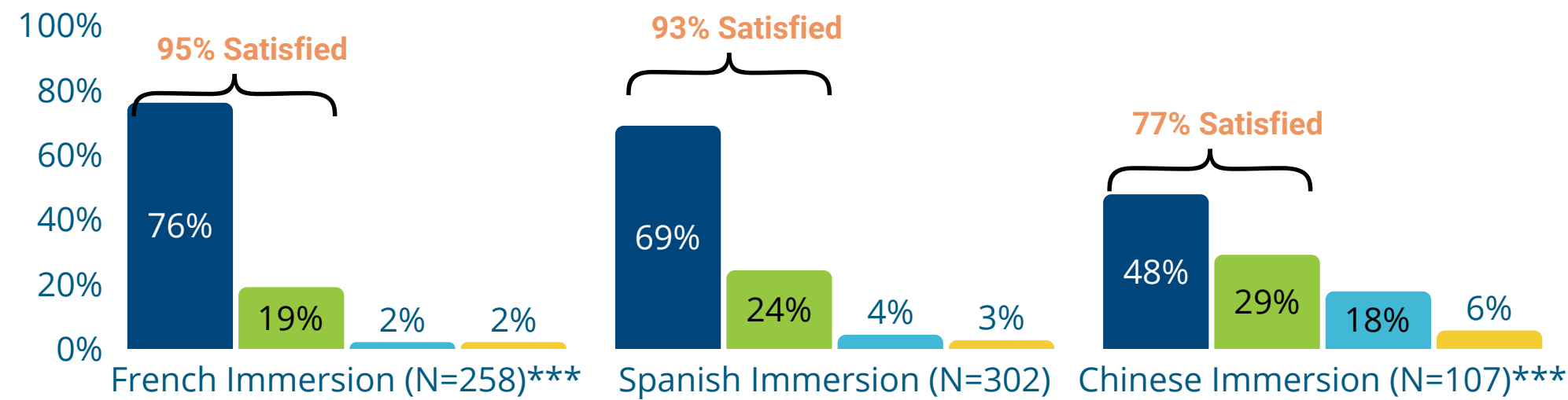
The vast majority of parents with a child in the Spanish or French immersion programs were satisfied with the program. Among parents of French immersion students, 95% were satisfied (76% very satisfied, 19% somewhat satisfied). Among Spanish immersion, 93% were satisfied (69% very satisfied, 24% somewhat satisfied). The majority (77%) of Chinese immersion were also satisfied (48% very satisfied, 29% somewhat satisfied); although significantly lower than French, significantly higher.

An even greater percentage of parents would recommend the immersion program to another family. Among parents of French immersion students, 97% would be very likely (87%) or somewhat likely (10%) to recommend. Similarly, 96% reported they would be very likely (79%) or somewhat likely (17%) to recommend. Among Chinese immersion, 89% (a significantly lower percentage) would be very likely (60%) or somewhat likely (29%) to recommend.

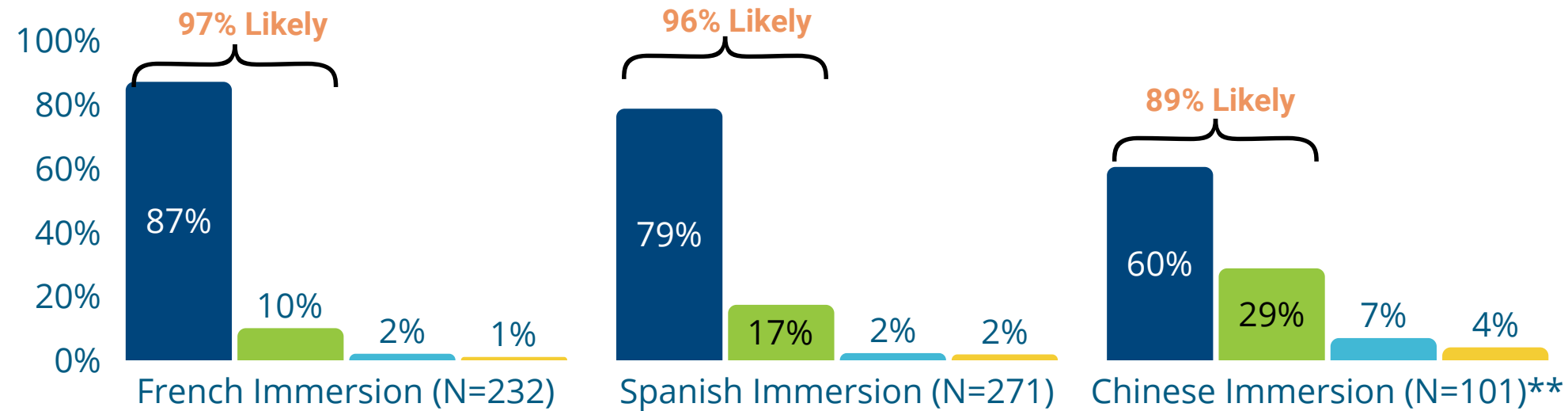
Most parents reported that their child will definitely or probably continue in the program in middle school, with 82% in French immersion, 82% in Spanish immersion, and 90% in Chinese Immersion. Although, responses were more split between definitely and probably among the parents of students in the French and Spanish immersion programs.

Reasons given for not recommending the program or not planning continuation to middle school are described in the following pages.

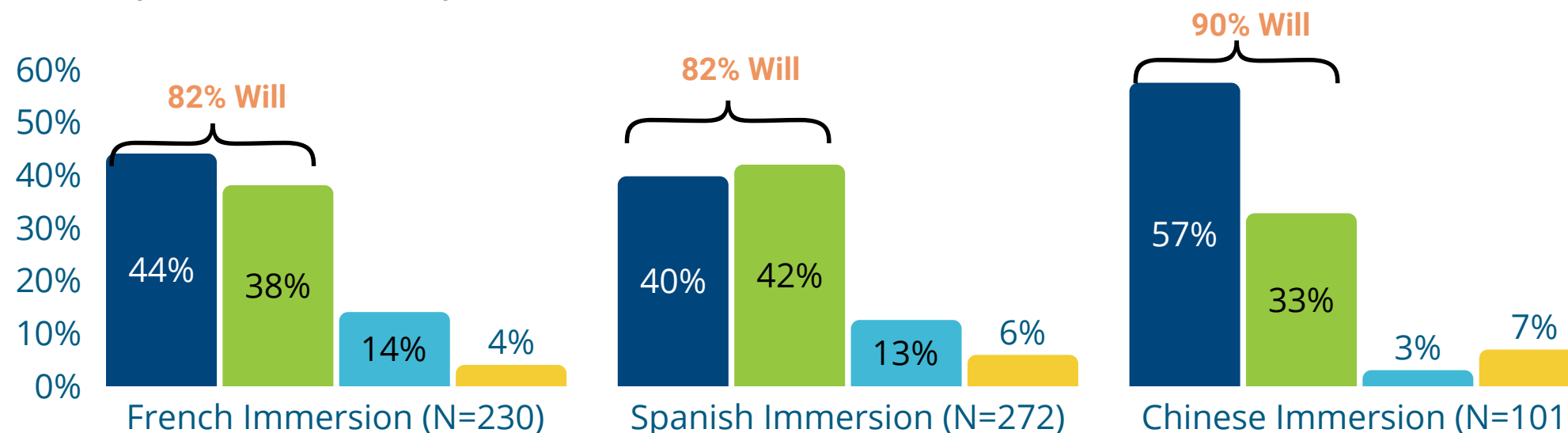
Overall, how satisfied are you with the immersion program for this child?



Would you recommend the immersion program to another family?



What is your likelihood of your child continuing to the immersion program in middle school?



- Very Satisfied
- Somewhat Satisfied
- Somewhat Dissatisfied
- Very Dissatisfied

- Very Likely
- Somewhat Likely
- Probably Would Not
- Definitely Would Not

- Definitely Will
- Probably Will
- Probably Will Not
- Definitely Will Not

Statistical significance:
*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001



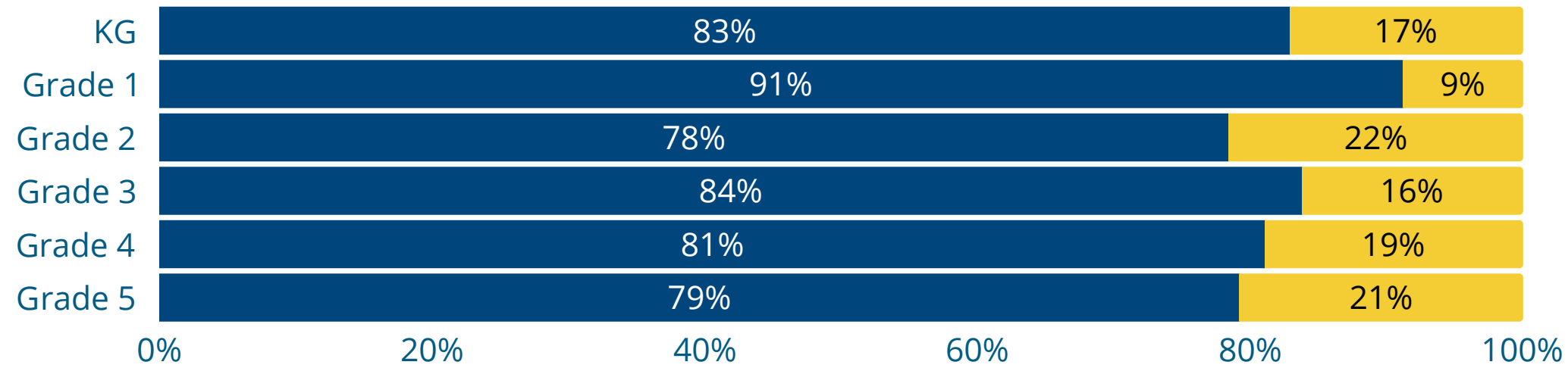
Results: Parent Survey

Overall Satisfaction, Recommendation, and Continuation to MS

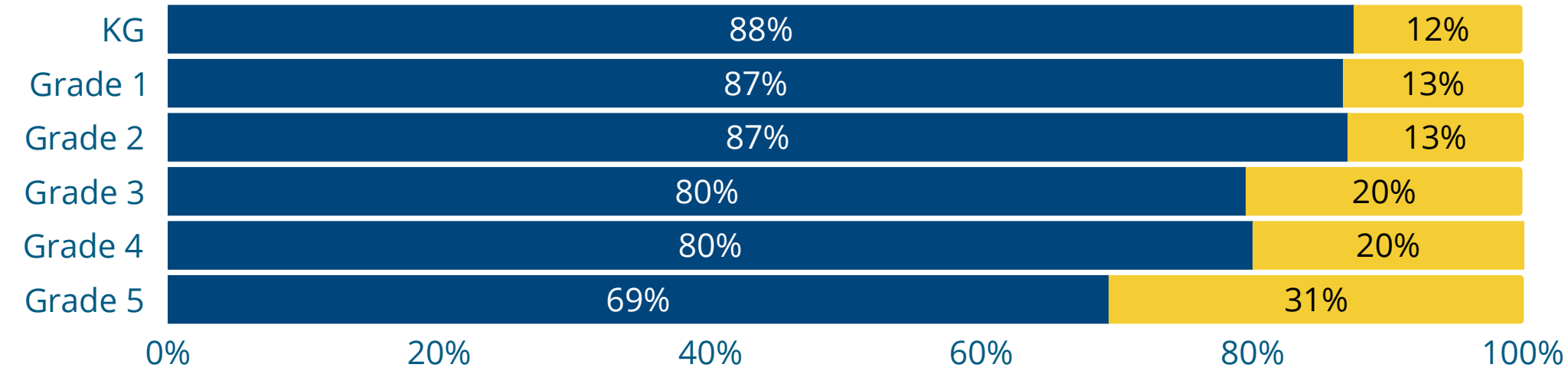
What is your likelihood of your child continuing to the immersion program in middle school?

● Definitely/Probably Will ● Definitely/Probably Will Not

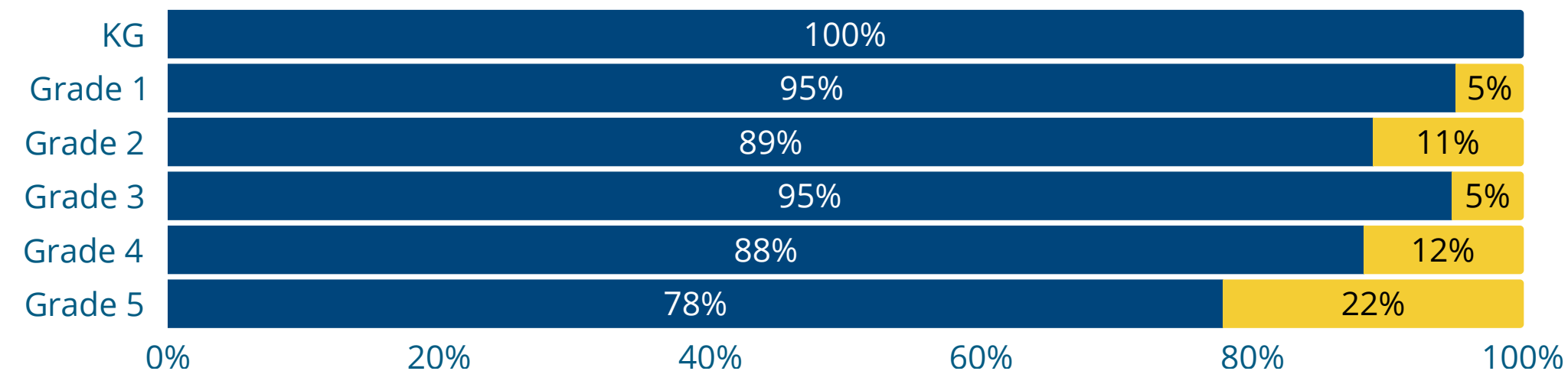
French
(N=230)



Spanish
(N=272)



Chinese
(N=101)



Findings

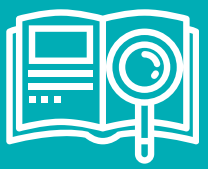
The intent to continue to the middle school immersion program was examined by grade level. Students and parents in Grade 5 are asked in February to submit their intent to continue or not in Grade 6; those who say “yes” may later decide to withdraw.

For the French immersion program, optimistic responses ranged from 78% to 84%, with Grade 1 parents reporting the highest intent at 91%.

For the Spanish immersion program, the combined percentages of “Definitely” and “Probably Will” decreased with higher grade levels starting with 88% among Kindergarten parents and ending with 69% among Grade 5 parents.

The intent to continue also declined with grade level among parents of students in the Chinese immersion program starting at 100% among Kindergarten parents and decreasing to 78% among Grade 5 parents.

It is worth noting that responses may vary by individual schools.



Results: Parent Survey

Recommendation Explanations

Most parents surveyed said they would recommend the program to other families, often highlighting the benefits they had already mentioned—especially the opportunity for children to be exposed to and learn a new language. Parents who said they would not recommend the program typically pointed to the same challenges noted elsewhere in the survey, such as academic demands, communication, staffing, transportation, and articulation concerns.

In addition, some parents shared advice or cautions for families considering enrollment. These comments often emphasized the importance of understanding the level of commitment, the structure of the program, and a potential caution of a child requires additional support. The following illustrative quotes highlight these perspectives.

Advice and Cautions Shared by Parents: Illustrative Quotes

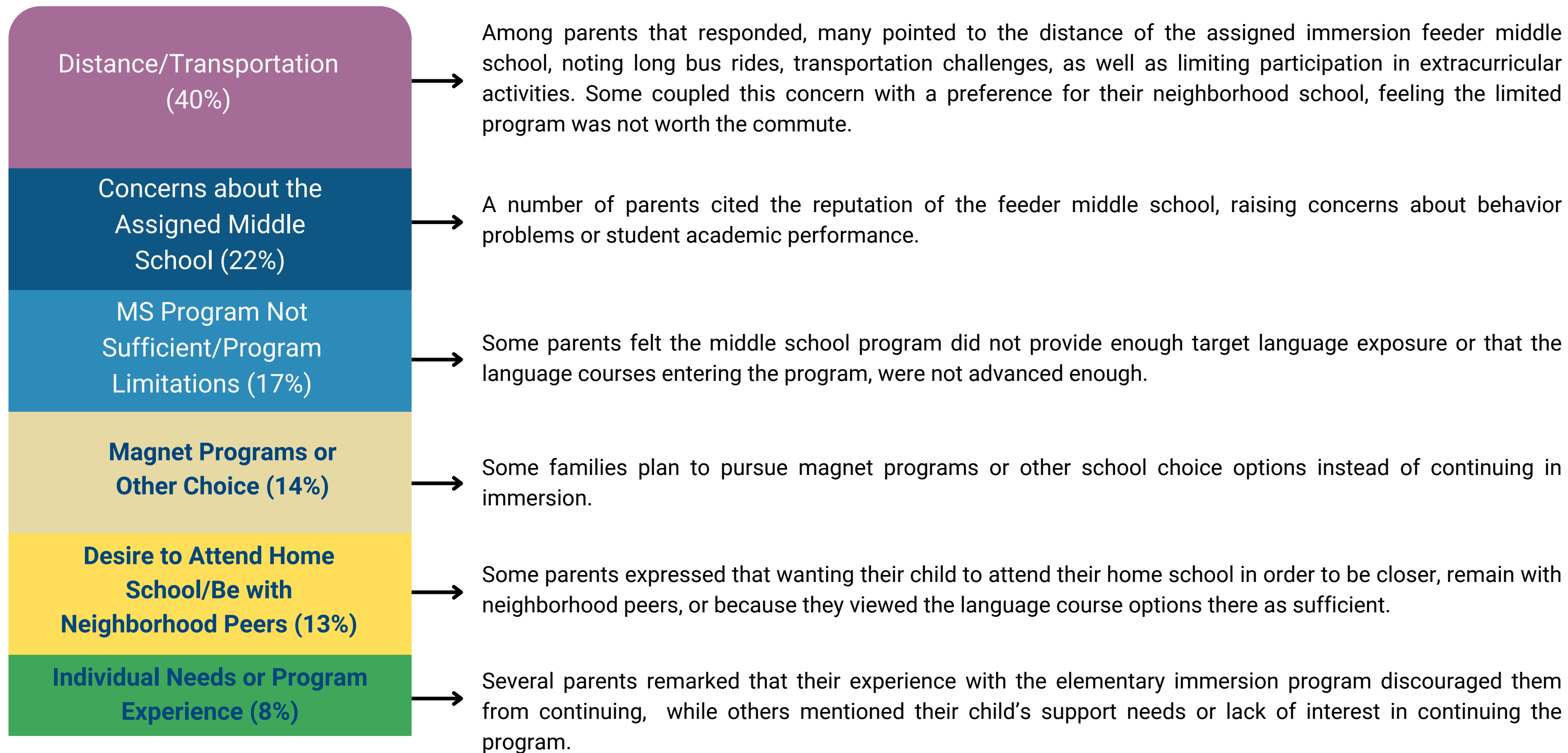
French Immersion	Spanish Immersion	Chinese Immersion
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I would caution parents about the program if they think their child has a learning disability especially a language-based disability... I believe an allocation of funds/priorities to support ALL students in the program is desperately needed (out of respect for the program itself and all the families involved!).” • “Learning supports are not available in immersion classrooms, and by the time you've identified that a learning issue is not immersion-related, your child is probably significantly behind their English peers.” • “The transition to elementary school can be more difficult since the child is adjusting to a whole new language. Also, when the immersion language is not spoken at home it is difficult to prevent loss of fluency over the summer.” • “I would not recommend the program to families with multiple children. The removal of the sibling link has had devastating consequences for our family.” • “The program does not adequately prepare parents entering the program for the real-life, day-to-day challenges of supporting a child in a language that is totally foreign to the parents and the child. We had to learn this the hard way,,, MCPS fail to provide adequate resources for children who are struggling with the new language, who have learning disabilities, etc.” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “It is a big commitment and takes a lot of supplemental navigation by the parents. So I would recommend with caveats.” • “An immersion program is a huge commitment for the family because kids are often going to school much farther from home and families need to be able to support the longer travel to/from school, also consider family involvement in the school community being farther from home. I think there should be more information about how an immersion elementary program can influence middle and high school decision....[Also] Spanish immersion kids are (anecdotally) horrible spellers because they haven't been taught any English spelling rules.” • “I would recommend it with the understanding that class sizes are large and always will fill to capacity.” • “I would not recommend if parents are not able to commit to the program. It's not just the student dedicating their hard work, time and effort. It's a family commitment.” • “Parent needs to be able to use Google translate to help with homework.” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I was told repeatedly that immersion would not require any outside support, and I feel that's not true - I've had to engage tutors in both Chinese language and math because my children both struggled to keep up ...and as non-native speakers they almost immediately fell behind their peers who have Chinese spoken in the home... I wish the expectations were set at the beginning and made clear. This is not as 'user-friendly' of a program as was advertised.” • “Immersion program is not for every child. Its depends on how the child interests and excitement want to learn in target language. Otherwise, it will be just a pressure to the child to learn other languages than what they speak daily at home.” • “I would not recommend as the OWI is not sufficient for a child without supplemental support (i.e., Chinese lessons outside of school) to learn Chinese well for a non native speaker or non native speaking home.” • “If anyone has to add a commute to their child's school, I don't believe the program is worth it. I recommend friends attend their homeschool and sign up for a weekend Chinese.”



Results: Parent Survey

Explanations for Not Planning to Continue to the Middle School Immersion Program

While most parents indicated they would have their child continue into the middle school immersion program, some parents who indicated they probably or definitely would not, shared open-ended responses for not doing so (N=87).





Open-Ended Themes Among Parents: Concerns

French (N=123)
Spanish (N=149)
Chinese (N=57)

The following chart highlights themes which emerged from an open-ended question asking parents to describe any concerns they had with their child’s immersion program. Themes with 10% or more of “like” responses from at least one immersion program were included. Examples and illustrative quotes from each immersion program are presented within each theme.

Concerns

Examples and Illustrative Quotes

Academics

French (19%): Nearly one-fifth of responding parents were most concerned about the lack of support for struggling learners, particularly students with learning differences or speech issues. They also worried about delays in English literacy, whether receiving a strong math instruction, and taking standardized tests in English versus French.

- “Unfortunately beyond 2nd grade, the program is not equipped to support students with learning disabilities. This is contrary to what parents were told when first signing up for the program.”
- “I worry about the learning curve. My child does not read in English (she is in 3rd grade). I am just placing my trust in the system that she will catch up when the time comes to learn English reading comes but seeing her English speaking 3rd grade friends excel in English reading is hard to see.”

Spanish (36%): More than one-third of parents were concerned about their children's English language development, foundational skills, and whether they will be prepared for middle school. They also express concerns about the program's ability to support students with special needs and learning disabilities. Additionally, parents question the rigor and consistency of Spanish immersion instruction, desiring more conversational practice, better communication about student progress, and progress monitoring. Furthermore, some parents feel non-fluent Spanish speakers are at a disadvantage compared to fluent students in the classroom.

- “I think that there is sometimes a disadvantage to having so many students that are fluent in Spanish in a class with some that aren't.”
- “I would like to know, after all this investment, what level of proficiency my child has in the target language at the end of elementary and middle school. This seems like important data to have on the immersion program across the county.”
- “Given how long these programs have been in place, there is significant room for growth. I would like to see more intentional curriculum development that effectively integrates subject learning and language acquisition, along with better oversight and clearer benchmarks for success.”
- “My oldest child needed additional supports (has an IEP) and was not provided support in the language he was learning. That was a challenge.”

Chinese (68%): Academics was by far the top issue mentioned by more than two-thirds of the 57 Chinese immersion parents who responded. Parents expressed significant concern about the effectiveness and consistency of the program, and that their children are not acquiring enough of the target language due to limited use of Mandarin in the classroom and insufficient focus on vocabulary and conversational skills. They highlight a lack student monitoring in the target language. Several parents were also frustrated by the lack of compacted math and support for advanced learners.

- “There's exposure but not immersion.”
- “Learning math and science in Mandarin is pretty useless. Kids leave the program without learning any conversational language.”
- “When putting in for the lottery, we were under the impression that it is a half day immersion, meaning the teacher would speak in the language and work would be done in it. Instead, we have learned that there are only a few exercises in that half of the day in the language and that the Chinese teacher primarily speaks English to the kids.”
- “The reality of the Chinese immersion program was incredibly disappointing. And confounded with the fact that my child was not able to receive Compacted Math.”..



Open-Ended Themes Among Parents: Concerns

Theme

Examples and Illustrative Quotes

Staffing

French (22%): More than one-fifth of responding parents expressed concerns over teacher effectiveness, strictness, and language fluency of some teachers in the French immersion program. There were also concerns over high teacher turnover and the difficulty of finding qualified, French-speaking substitute teachers, which has led to disruption and impacted learning.

- “I am concerned about classroom staffing. Teachers who are not versed in American educational cultural norms are overly strict, frequently display emotional dysregulation and poor classroom management, and harshly punish what is commonly understood as age-appropriate or expected behavior in other classroom settings.”
- “I am not sure about staff development that may be particularly geared towards language teachers, but this might be something to look into if it doesn't already exist.”
- “It is concerning that there seem to not be sufficient French-speaking substitute teachers that can step in when needed.”

Spanish (17%): Some parents were disturbed about the inconsistent quality and experience of immersion teachers, with particular frustration around certain grade levels. Several described specific negative teacher experiences as traumatic or discouraging enough to consider leaving the program. Frequent teacher turnover, lack of classroom management, poor communication, and limited Spanish fluency or use were cited as ongoing issues.

- “The past few years have had a hard time retaining good teachers in the schools. New teachers don't have the same level of teaching experience and have had a lot of communication challenges with the parents.”
- “Immersion teachers need complete reevaluation. They do not meet the professionalism of the other staff...multiple incidents across other families including our own.”
- “This year there seems to be a lot of teacher absences...students are divided up into [non-immersion] classes if no sub (sub may or may not speak Spanish).”

Sibling Enrollment

French (15%): Some responding parents were troubled about the removal of the sibling link or guarantee for immersion programs, which makes it difficult to have children in different schools and creates logistical challenges for families. Some expressed this can lead to division within families and potentially limit opportunities for younger children.

- “It is difficult to have kids at different schools and that could be a barrier to entry - that means that the current method does not add to increased inclusivity.”
- “Separating siblings has devastating and deeply worrisome consequences. It not only disrupts family structure and daily routines but also affects a child's sense of security, confidence, and self-worth. These emotional impacts cannot be ignored...There are also significant academic benefits to keeping siblings together in immersion programs. Siblings support one another with homework and reinforce the target language by speaking together at home.”

Spanish (5%): Under a tenth of parents reported concern about sibling enrollment process.

- “It has been a significant hardship for our family that her brother cannot attend the program, and it has been hard on him mentally and emotionally not to have the same learning opportunities as his sister. This program should have a much stronger sibling preference factor and equal neighborhood preference... If the sibling preference only extends to siblings within a reasonable number of years that is fine and understandable.”
- “I am extremely disappointed and do not believe the current lottery system is fair. Perhaps removing the sibling preference was a mistake. My second child was too far down the waitlist to get into the program. Not only is his older sibling in the program, but we live within the [school] boundaries (is our home school). These two factors combined should have permitted him into the program.”



Open-Ended Themes Among Parents: Concerns

Theme

Examples and Illustrative Quotes

Communication

French (8%): Some responding parents primarily cited a lack of communication regarding student progress, instruction that's happening during the day, as well as a need for more information regarding staffing and transitioning.

- An orientation session for students who are admitted off the waitlist, especially after school has started, would be helpful...anything to smooth the transition.
- I feel like I don't know enough about the day-to-day for my child or their progress.

Spanish (23%): Nearly one-fourth of parents primarily cited a lack of communication regarding student progress, instruction that's happening during the day, and how to support their student at home. Some mentioned the challenge of receiving parent communication in Spanish, not English.

- "Need for more communications in what the students are learning, how to support students, the types of testing (English vs Spanish)."
- "We are only sent home graded classwork every few months, so I'm not sure how my child is doing."
- "They often assume the parents speak Spanish and send instructions or communication only in Spanish which isn't fair to the English speaking parents."

Chinese (28%): Over one-fourth of parents primarily pointed to a need for how to support their student at home, as well as a lack of communication regarding student academic progress, instruction that's happening during the day, and the structure of the program.

- "I think the teachers can do a better job at informing parents what they are learning and provide some suggestions about how to support the learning at home."
- "I just don't know exactly what they are learning. The progress per child. Nothing gets sent home. No extra work. No handwriting."
- "More guidance/resources to support at-home learning in the target language....need more clubs and activities to support language."
- "There should have been clear communication about the math program. Specifically that it will be an advanced program regardless of each student's readiness."
- "We were under the impression that it is a half day immersion, meaning the teacher would speak to the kids in the language and work would be done in it. Instead, we have learned that there are only a few exercises or moments in that half of the day in the [target] language..."

Middle and High School Concerns

French (10%): A tenth of responding parents were apprehensive about the transition beyond elementary school, including the absence of a high school immersion program and various issues at the middle school level, such as the rigor of the immersion curriculum and reported behavior problems at the designated middle school.

- "The biggest failure of the immersion programs at MCPS is the complete ending of them in middle school. There needs to be high schools that continue the progress they have made. So much time and effort is put into elementary and even middle school is done well. But in high school they move to French 4."
- "Language immersion also sees a less robust implementation in Middle School (not just a lower percentage of class time, but a less rigorous/enriched experience)."

Spanish (15%): More than a tenth of parents expressed frustration about the lack of accessible and continuous middle and high school immersion options, citing reduced articulation options, inconvenient locations, and separation from peers as major drawbacks. Some also had concerns about the preparation and transition to middle school.

- "The consistent changing of the immersion program is abysmal. My child entered in kindergarten and we knew that we had a pathway through high school. First, high school immersion was removed. Then options for middle school were removed."
- "We are concerned that the MS is too far, and wish very much that there were an alternate closer...It would be helpful to understand why a closer MS was not considered."
- "The limitation of MS options that would allow him to continue. So our family's only choice is to suffer a ridiculous daily commute or drop Spanish immersion after six years of investment in the language. It's a pretty terrible choice."



Open-Ended Themes Among Parents: Concerns

Theme

Examples and Illustrative Quotes

Middle and High School Concerns—Continued

Chinese (18%): Nearly one-fifth of responding parents were apprehensive about the vertical articulation beyond elementary school, including the absence of a high school immersion program and various issues at the middle school level, such as the rigor of the immersion curriculum, transportation, and reported behavior problems at the designated middle school.

- “I would like for the program to continue through middle school, and high school. It would be great if there was partial immersion in middle school and high school (instead of taking one language class).”
- “After six years in Chinese immersion they take Chinese 1 as 6th graders, along with anyone else at [the middle school] who has never even taken Chinese before.”

Division between Immersion and Non-Immersion (10%)

French (10%): A tenth of parents were troubled that there are social and cultural divisions and even conflict within the schools, and a sense of separation between immersion and non-immersion students and families. They emphasized the need for more intentional efforts to bridge what feels like a “school within a school” dynamic.

- “I do not love how it creates a division in the school - Kids in the same school having two completely different learning experience.”...“Really, with the number of applicants, I wish they would make the entire school immersion.”
- “The way that the 'school within a school' dynamics play out is less than ideal (e.g. disputes at recess, relatively few cross-program friendships). The socioeconomic differences between the immersion program and the rest of the school are quite noticeable.”
- “I worry that the[non-immersion] students and families feel excluded and like second-class citizens. Often the kids don't socialize (even when given the opportunity, even though they're neighbors, even though they can communicate in English) because they feel different from each other.”

Limited Enrollment Slots and Funding (10%)

French (10%): A tenth of parents expressed concern about the limited number of program slots and hope for program expansion. Some also desire continued financial support and are concerned that the program might be cancelled.

- “There are not enough slots and the lottery system means that a lot of children do not get selected...You offer all these great programs, but they are too limited. Fun fact, my older son is 0 for 11 on MCPS lotteries... It's frustrating to dangle all these opportunities and not actually be able to access them.”
- “I fear the immersion program losing out on financial and county support. ”
- “Given the high interest of immersion programs in the county, creating and expanding opportunities would be wonderful for MCPS families.”

Other

French: There were a variety of other concerns submitted. Some that had several mentions include:

- Class sizes too large
- Communication (re: transition to kindergarten, transition to middle schools, child's progress, teachers out on leave)
- Bus schedule/distance from home
- More guidance for student support at home



Open-Ended Themes Among Parents: Concerns

Theme

Examples and Illustrative Quotesamples

Other— Continued

Spanish: There were a variety of other concerns submitted. Some that had several mentions include:

- Class sizes too large
- Enrollment of students who's first language is Spanish
- Siblings not automatically able to enroll
- Lack of materials
- Distance to school, bus schedule
- Division between immersion and non=immersion students
- Concern of program being cancelled

Chinese: There were a variety of other concerns submitted. Some that had several mentions include:

- Class sizes too large
- Concern about program's future

Open-Ended Themes Among Parent: Benefits

The following chart highlights program benefits that were identified from an open-ended question asking parents to describe what they liked most about their child's immersion program. Categories that contained 10% or more of responses in at least one of the immersion programs, are included in the table.

Theme	French (N=167)	Spanish (N=197)	Chinese (N=76)
Teachers and Staff	54%	46%	47%
Despite this theme also reported as a concern, parents frequently mentioned teachers and staff as dedicated and supportive, often praising specific teachers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have had wonderful, caring, and dedicated teachers who have made a genuine effort to support their students both academically and socially. [team leader] is a fantastic advocate for the program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The teachers are absolutely wonderful. They are invested, kind, brilliant, and caring. Most teachers are very good and caring. Strong administration. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The teachers are native speakers, which makes learning feel more authentic and helps with pronunciation and cultural context. The teachers are very supportive and passionate to help the students understand their target language especially in math and science by doing fun activities in the classroom to build the students interest and memorization in learning.
Community	21%	27%	29%
Parents across the programs appreciated the sense of community, including connection among parents and students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I love that it creates a super strong sense of community within cohort. I love the school community and the diversity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Close community of students, families and teachers. There is also a great community of parents from all over the world who spend their time and resources supporting the school. 	<p>The students have formed a close bond because they have remained together in the same class throughout elementary.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The teachers and the community make this a stellar investment. The parents and the teachers care.
Progress in Learning the Language	19%	17%	8%
Parents reported seeing their child's progress in learning the immersion language, despite previously reported concerns regarding ELA and academics.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The kids actually learn the language and are speaking by 1st grade which is incredible. Child is fluent and has a great accent! Impressive. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> My child is becoming bilingual and biliterate in Spanish which is amazing to see. My child is able to speak a language not spoken at home. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ability to reinforce the learning of a language often spoken in our home, among friends and family. My child does know some vocabulary and can read some words that I haven't taught her.

Open-Ended Themes Among Parent: Benefits

Theme	French (N=167)	Spanish (N=197)	Chinese (N=76)
<p>Great Opportunity, Exposure</p> <p>Parents pointed to the immersion program as a great opportunity for their child to learn another language and be exposed to other cultures and languages.</p>	<p>16%</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>It has opened the world to him in a way that it would be nearly impossible to imagine otherwise. I can't praise enough the richness this has brought to our lives.</i> • <i>It is the opportunity of a lifetime to learn a language fully at such an early age.</i> 	<p>21%</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Great program that allows children to be exposed to different cultures and expand their knowledge.</i> • <i>My child is receiving a once in a lifetime opportunity to learn another language that they would otherwise never have the exposure of learning in such an in depth way.</i> 	<p>37%</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I like that my child is exposed to another language that they otherwise would not be exposed to,</i> • <i>I like the exposure to a global language and another culture.</i> • <i>Cultural influence and making us not feel so much like a minority.</i>
<p>Method of Instruction, Rigor</p> <p>Parents in the full immersion programs praised the immersive structure, with some also noting the challenge and rigor it entailed.</p>	<p>17%</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I appreciate how dedicated program staff are to a full immersion experience.</i> • <i>Great language instruction without sacrificing any rigor in other subjects.</i> 	<p>16%</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>This year we have appreciated the more rigorous curriculum and opportunities for enrichment. We have also appreciated the paper homework including self-driven projects.</i> • <i>They incorporate the language immersion into everything.</i> 	<p>[Mentions were combined with Other Benefits]</p>
<p>Other Benefits</p> <p>A variety of other benefits were reported, including that their child was happy and excited (5%-7%).</p>	<p>19%</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>My son is excited to go to school. He speaks French fluently now. He enjoys the extracurricular activities.</i> • <i>Having a bus pick my child up at her local elementary school and drop her off was essential. Without that, I am not sure dither would have been able to attend.</i> 	<p>17%</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I like the fact that they try to keep communication open and try to provide as much resources for parents as possible. They work with the children closely and set realistic expectations.</i> • <i>The end of year performance that showcases each grades progress is amazing and shows what to expect in future year.</i> 	<p>8%</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Partial immersion [structure], that the second half of the subjects is in English.</i> • <i>Constant practicing</i>

French Immersion Enrollment

Findings

Evaluation Q4: What is the demographic make-up of elementary students enrolled in the One-Way Immersion programs?

French Immersion Enrollment 2024–2025		Maryvale ES (Regional) N=285		Sligo Creek ES (Regional) N=289	
Demographics/ Services	Total N=574	K–Grade 2 N=142	Grades 3–5 N=143	K–Grade 2 N=146	Grades 3–5 N=143
Asian and Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	39 (6.9%)	15 (10.6%)	11 (7.7%)	7 (4.8%)	6 (4.2%)
Black or African American	131 (22.8%)	33 (23.2%)	46 (32.2%)	23 (15.8%)	29 (20.3%)
Hispanic/Latino	89 (15.5%)	31 (21.8%)	28 (19.6%)	17 (11.6%)	13 (9.1%)
Two or More Races	69 (12.0%)	26 (18.3%)	16 (11.2%)	18 (12.3%)	9 (6.3%)
White	246 (42.9%)	37 (26.1%)	42 (29.4%)	81 (55.5%)	86 (60.1%)
Female	313 (54.5%)	83 (58.5%)	76 (53.1%)	74 (50.7%)	80 (55.9%)
Male	260 (45.3%)	59 (41.5%)	67 (46.9%)	71 (48.6%)	63 (44.1%)
FARMS	89 (15.5%)	37 (26.1%)	29 (20.3%)	14 (9.6%)	9 (6.3%)
EML	38 (6.6%)	17 (12.0%)	7 (4.9%)	9 (6.2%)	5 (3.5%)
IEP	37 (6.4%)	11 (7.7%)	5 (3.5%)	9 (6.2%)	12 (8.4%)
Lang. at Home: English	516 (89.9%)	112 (78.9%)	131 (91.6%)	136 (93.2%)	137 (95.8%)
Lang. at Home: French	24 (4.2%)	9 (6.3%)	4 (2.8%)	6 (4.0%)	5 (3.5%)
Lang. at Home: Spanish	14 (2.4%)	9 (6.3%)	3 (2.1%)	2 (1.4%)	0
Lang. at Home: All Other	20 (3.5%)	12 (8.5%)	5 (3.5%)	2 (1.4%)	1 (.7)

The French immersion program had 574 students enrolled in 2024–2025 across two schools. Collectively, enrollment was primarily made up of White students (42.9%), followed by Black or African American (22.8%) and Hispanic/Latino (15.5%) students. However, the percentage of White students at Maryvale was fewer (26.1% for K–Grade 2 and 29.4% for Grades 3–5) and greater at Sligo Creek (55.5% for K–2 and 60.1% for Grades 3–5). Each school is a regional school meaning they receive students from the geographic region of the county and, like all students in the immersion programs, enrollment requires students entering after Grade 1 to pass a proficiency test in the target language.

English was the primary language at home for most students (89.9%). French was the primary language at home for 4.2% of the students. It is worth noting that the language at home is self-identified by parents/guardians and does not indicate that it is the only language spoken at home.

Overall, there was a greater percentage of females (54.5%) than males (45.3%) enrolled in the French immersion Program; however, this varied across schools and grade levels.

Students receiving FARMS services, identified as EMLs, and having IEPs made up 15.5%, 6.6%, and 6.4%, respectively, of the total enrollment. Maryvale had a greater percentage of students receiving FARMS (26.1% and 20.3%).

Enrollment Source: Performance Matters, February 2025. Demographics/Services Source: MCPS June 2025 Enrollment File.

Note. Results for neutral gender not shown due to small n.

Spanish Immersion Enrollment

Findings

Spanish Immersion Enrollment 2024–2025		Burnt Mills ES (local then county) N=119		Rock Creek ES (county) N=290		William Tyler Page ES (local, then county) N=261	
Demographics/ Services	Total N=670	K–Grade 2 N=67	Grades 3–5 N=52	K–Grade 2 N=146	Grades 3–5 N=144	K–Grade 2 N=140	Grades 3–5 N=121
Asian and Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	34 (5.0%)	4 (6.0%)	3 (5.8%)	7 (4.8%)	2 (1.4%)	9 (6.4%)	9 (7.4%)
Black or African American	119 (17.8%)	15 (22.4%)	13 (25.0%)	22 (15.1%)	15 (10.4%)	26 (18.6%)	28 (23.1%)
Hispanic/Latino	239 (35.7%)	21 (31.3%)	16 (30.8%)	53 (36.3%)	63 (43.8%)	45 (32.1%)	41 (33.9%)
Two or More Races	56 (8.4%)	5 (7.5%)	8 (15.4%)	9 (6.2%)	8 (5.6%)	12 (8.6%)	14 (11.6%)
White	223 (33.1%)	22 (32.8)	12 (22.6)	55 (37.7%)	56 (38.9%)	48 (34.3)	29 (24.0%)
Female	353 (52.7%)	32 (47.8%)	28 (53.8%)	70 (47.9%)	75 (52.1%)	92 (65.7%)	56 (46.3%)
Male	316 (47.2%)	34 (50.7%)	24 (46.2%)	76 (52.1%)	69 (47.9%)	48 (34.3%)	65 (53.7%)
FARMS	86 (12.8%)	7 (10.4%)	8 (15.4%)	13 (8.9%)	14 (9.7%)	22 (15.7%)	22 (18.2%)
EML	7 (1.0%)	-	-	2 (1.4%)	3 (2.1%)	1 (<1%)	1 (<1%)
IEP	59 (8.8%)	11 (16.4%)	2 (3.8%)	7 (4.8%)	14 (9.7%)	13 (9.3%)	22 (12.9%)
Lang. at Home: English	628 (93.7%)	64 (95.5%)	50 (96.2%)	131 (89.7%)	136 (94.4%)	132 (94.3%)	115 (95.0%)
Lang. at Home: Spanish	36 (5.4%)	2 (3.0%)	1 (1.9%)	14 (9.6%)	7 (4.9%)	6 (4.3%)	6 (5.0%)
Lang. at Home: All Other	6 (<1%)	1 (<1%)	1 (<1%)	1 (<1%)	1 (<1%)	2 (<1%)	0

The Spanish immersion program had 670 students enrolled in 2024–2025 across three schools. Collectively, enrollment was primarily made up of Hispanic/Latino (35.7%) and White (33.1%) students, followed by Black or African American (17.8%). However, the distribution of students' race/ethnicity varied by school and grade level. Most notably, students in Grades 3–5 at Rock Creek ES had a greater percentage of Hispanic/Latino students (43.8%) compared to K–Grade 2 students (36.3%). Rock Creek ES receives students from all over the county and, like all students in the immersion programs, enrollment requires students entering after Grade 1 to pass a proficiency test in the target language.

English was the primary language at home for most students (93.7%). Spanish was the primary language at home for 5.4% of the students, with a greater percentage (9.6%) among K–2 students at Rock Creek ES. It is worth noting that the language at home is self-identified by parents/guardians and does not indicate that it is the only language spoken at home.

Overall, there was a higher percentage of females (52.7%) than males (47.2%) enrolled in the Spanish immersion Program; however, this varied across schools and grade levels.

Students receiving FARMS services and having IEPs made up 12.8% and 8.8% respectively of the total enrollment. Again, percentages varied by school and grade level.

Enrollment Source: Performance Matters, June 2025. Demographics/Services Source: MCPS June 2025 Enrollment File.

Chinese Immersion Enrollment

Findings

Chinese Immersion Enrollment 2024–2025		Bayard Rustin ES (Countywide) N=152		Potomac ES (Local, then Countywide) N=145	
Demographics/ Services	Total N=297	K–Grade 2 N=73	Grades 3–5 N=79	K–Grade 2 N=73	Grades 3–5 N=72
Asian and Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	125 (42.1%)	32 (43.9%)	28 (35.4%)	31 (42.5%)	34 (47.2%)
Black or African American	26 (8.8%)	10 (13.7%)	11 (13.9%)	3 (4.1%)	2 (2.8%)
Hispanic/Latino	24 (8.1%)	4 (5.5%)	9 (11.4%)	8 (11.0%)	3 (4.2%)
Two or More Races	62 (20.9%)	15 (20.5%)	20 (25.4%)	8 (11.0%)	20 (27.7%)
White	59 (19.9%)	12 (16.4%)	11 (13.9%)	23 (31.5%)	13 (18.1%)
Female	155 (52.2%)	42 (57.5%)	42 (53.2%)	38 (52.1%)	33 (45.8%)
Male	142 (47.8%)	31 (42.5%)	37 (46.8%)	35 (47.9%)	39 (54.2%)
FARMS	29 (9.8%)	10 (13.7%)	11 (13.9%)	1 (1.4%)	7 (9.7%)
EML	11 (3.7%)	2 (2.7%)	2 (2.5%)	5 (6.8%)	2 (2.8%)
IEP	16 (5.4%)	4 (5.5%)	8 (10.1%)	2 (2.7%)	2 (2.8%)
Lang. at Home: English	254 (85.4%)	56 (76.7%)	71 (89.9%)	61 (83.6%)	66 (91.7%)
Lang. at Home: Chinese	30 (10.1%)	13 (17.8%)	4 (5.1%)	7 (9.6%)	6 (8.3%)
Lang. at Home: All Other	13 (4.5%)	4 (5.5%)	4 (5.1%)	5 (6.8%)	0

Enrollment Source: Performance Matters, June 2025. Demographics/Services Source: MCPS June 2025 Enrollment File.

The Chinese immersion program had 297 students enrolled in 2024–2025 across two schools. Collectively, the Chinese immersion program was primarily made up of Asian students, combined with Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (42.1%). The percentage of Asian students was greater among the lower grades at Bayard Rustin (43.9% vs 35.4%) and greater in the higher grades at Potomac (42.5% vs 47.2%). Two or More Races (20.9%) and White (19.9%) students made up the Chinese immersion program. Bayard Rustin receives students countywide and Potomac ES receives schools from the local home school population first, and then countywide. Like all students in the immersion programs, enrollment requires students entering after Grade 1 to pass a proficiency test in the target language.

English was the primary language at home for most students (85.4%). Chinese was the primary language at home for 10.1% of the students and notably 17.8% of K–2 students at Bayard Rustin ES. It is worth noting that the language at home is self-identified by parents/guardians and does not indicate that it is the only language spoken at home.

Overall, there was a greater percentage of females (52.2%) than males (47.8%) enrolled in the French immersion Program; however, this varied across schools and grade levels.

Students receiving FARMS services, identified as EML and having IEPs made up 9.8%, 3.7%, and 5.4% respectively of the total enrollment. Bayard Rustin students had a greater percentage receiving FARMS (13.7% and 13.9%) and students with IEPs in Grades 3-5 (10.1%).



Results: Grade 6 Language Enrollment

Evaluation Q5: What percentage of elementary immersion students continue to a middle school immersion program?

French Immersion Students

Middle School (Grade 6) Language Course	Grade 5 in 2023–2024 (N=86)	Grade 5 in 2024–2025 (N=87)
French Immersion	61.2%	72.4%
Non-Immersion: French 1	4.7%	3.4%
Non-Immersion: French 2	12.9%	2.3%
Non-Immersion: Spanish 1	5.9%	5.7%
Non-Immersion: Chinese 1	-	1.1%
Non-Immersion: No Language	15.3%	14.9%

Spanish Immersion Students

Middle School (Grade 6) Language Course	Grade 5 in 2023–2024 (N=89)*	Grade 5 in 2024–2025 (N=97)
Spanish Immersion	83.1%	63.3%
Non-Immersion: Spanish 1	3.4%	18.4%
Non-Immersion: Spanish 2	1.1%	6.1%
Non-Immersion: French 1	3.4%	3.1%
Non-Immersion: Chinese 1	-	1.0%
Non-Immersion: No Language	6.7%	8.2%

Chinese Immersion Students

Middle School (Grade 6) Language Course	Grade 5 in 2023–2024 (N=49)	Grade 5 in 2024–2025 (N=45)
Chinese Immersion	79.6%	80.0%
Non-Immersion: Chinese 1	4.1%	-
Non-Immersion: French 1	4.1%	2.2%
Non-Immersion: Spanish 1	12.2%	8.9%
Non-Immersion: No Language	0%	8.9%

*An additional 2.2% were in a Spanish Immersion Course, but not an immersion school.

Notes: N's reflect only those still enrolled in MCPS in Grade 5.

Percentages from 2024–2025 Grade 5 students, reflect early fall enrollment in Grade 6 language course/program.



Findings

Most immersion students continued to the corresponding middle school immersion program after Grade 5 in 2023–2024 and 2024–2025, although Spanish immersion saw a decrease in 2024–2025, likely due to changes in immersion program articulation to the middle school level. For example, two of the Spanish immersion schools that had articulated to Silver Spring International, changed to White Oak Middle School. Among Grade 5 students, 61.2% and 72.4% of French immersion students, 83.1% and 63.3% of Spanish immersion students, and 79.6% and 80% of Chinese immersion students enrolled in their middle school immersion programs. Most students who did not continue in immersion enrolled in Level 1 or 2 of the same target language, while some switched to a different language. French immersion had the highest percentage of students not continuing with any language (15.3% and 14.9%), compared to 6.7% and 8.2% of Spanish immersion students and 0% and 8.9% of Chinese immersion students.



Results: French Immersion

Immersion vs. District: Grades 3 and 5



Findings

The following addresses Evaluation Q6: What is the academic achievement of Grade 3 and 5 students among students in OWI compared to the district and similar peers not enrolled?

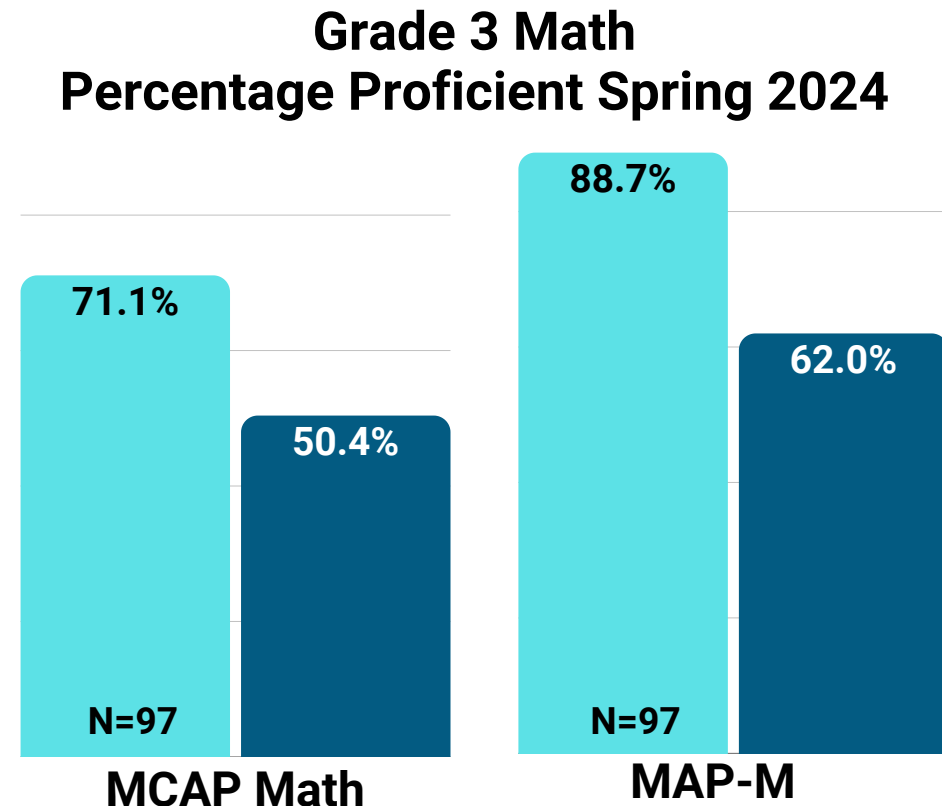
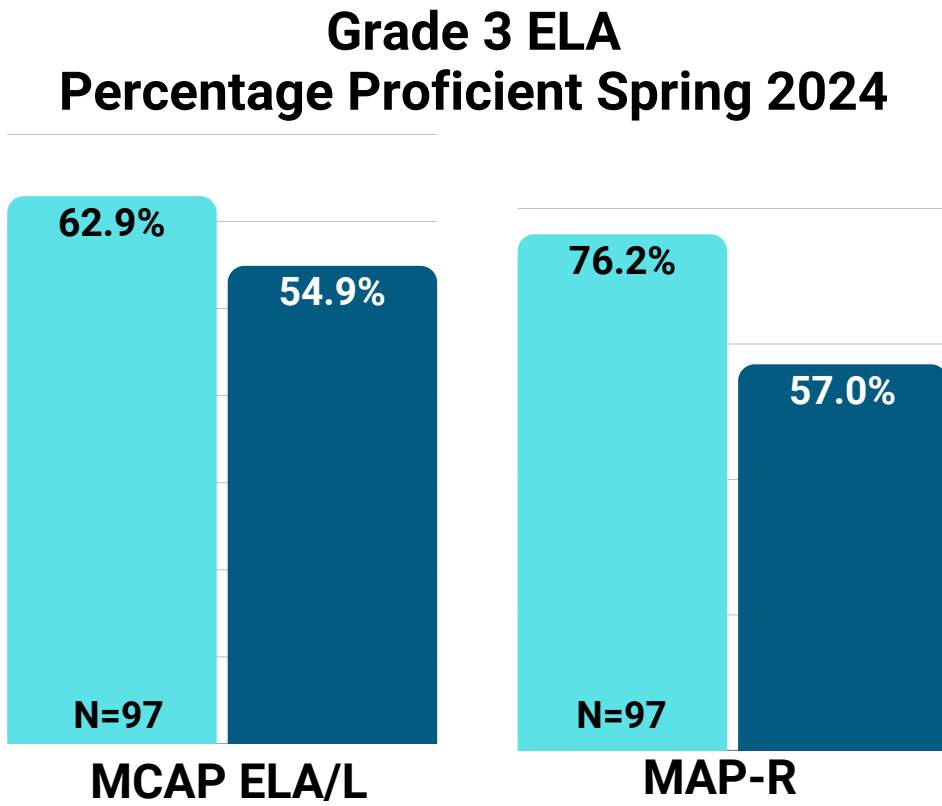
The percentage of Grade 3 French immersion students meeting proficient levels (a score of 3 or higher) on MCAP ELA/L and Math assessments, and MAP reading and math assessments, were substantially higher when compared to MCPS in total.

For literacy, 62.9% of Grade 3 immersion students were proficient on MCAP ELA/L compared to 54.9% for the district. Additionally, 76.2% of immersion students were proficient on MAP-R compared to 57% for the district. For math, 71.1% of immersion students were proficient on MCAP and 88.7% were proficient on MAP-M compared to 50.4% and 62% respectively for the district.

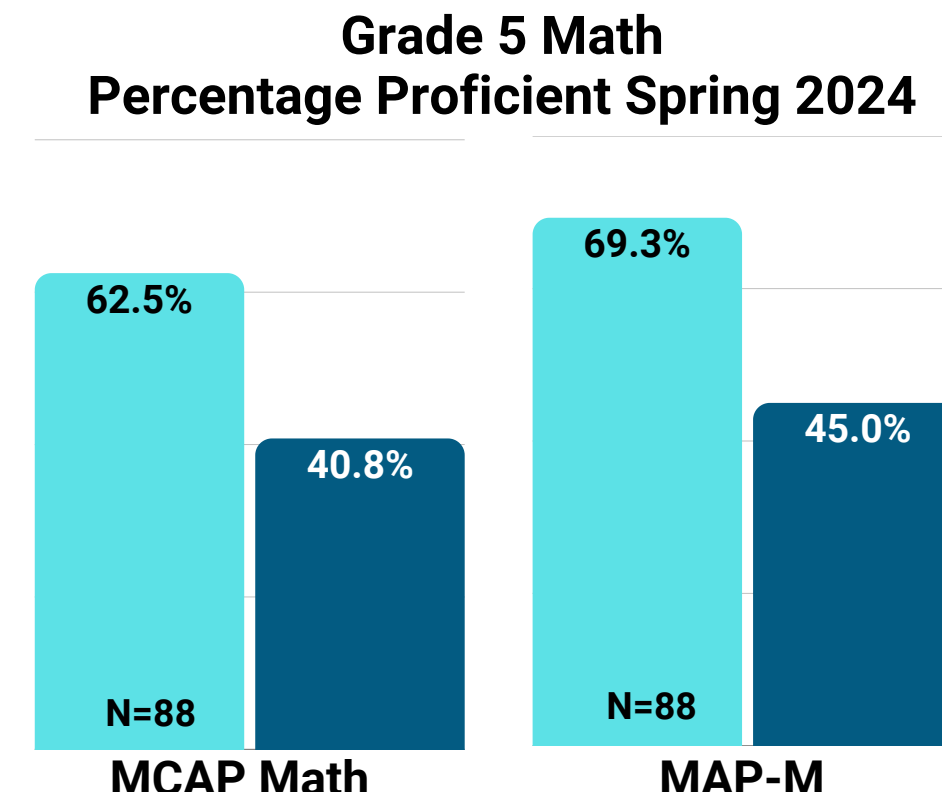
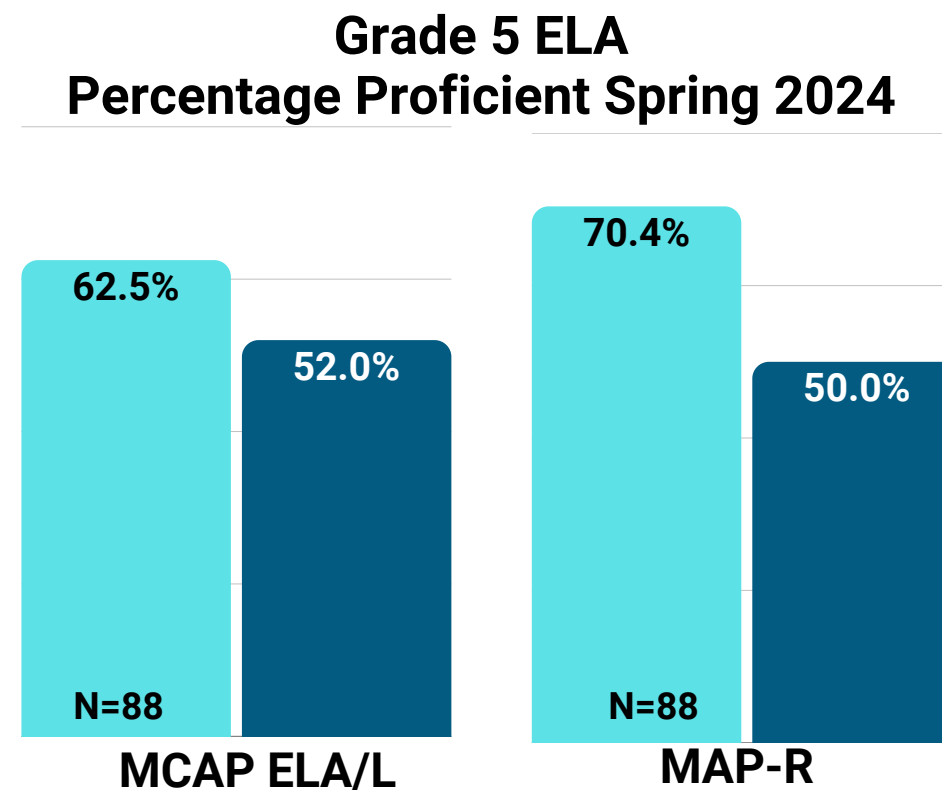
The percentage of Grade 5 students meeting proficient levels on MCAP and MAP assessments in both ELA/L and Math were higher when compared to MCPS in total.

For literacy, 62.5% of Grade 5 immersion students were proficient on MCAP ELA/L compared to 52% for the district. Additionally, 70.4% of immersion students were proficient on MAP-R compared to 50% for the district. For math, 62.5% of immersion students were proficient on MCAP and 69.3% were proficient on MAP-M compared to 40.8% and 45% respectively for the district.

Percentages reflect a performance level of 3 or above for MCAP, and an assigned score of 3 or above on MAP using MAP RIT scores and MCPS Evidence of Learning Framework criteria.



● Immersion Participants ● MCPS





Results: French Immersion

Immersion vs. Comparison Group: Grades 3 and 5



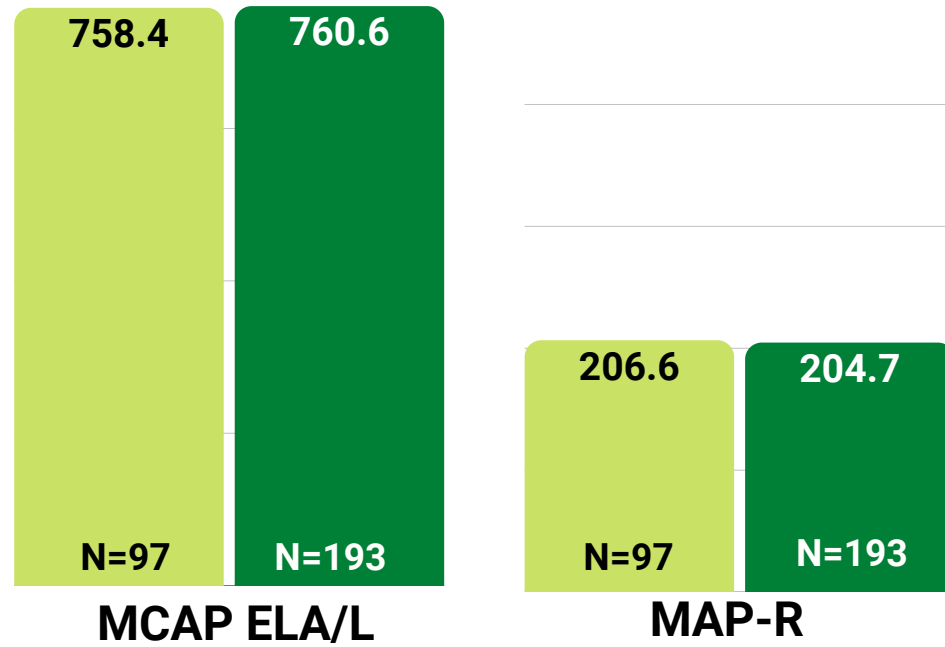
Findings

Student performance in English literacy and math among immersion students was compared to a matched comparison group using MCAP scale scores and NWEA MAP RIT scores.

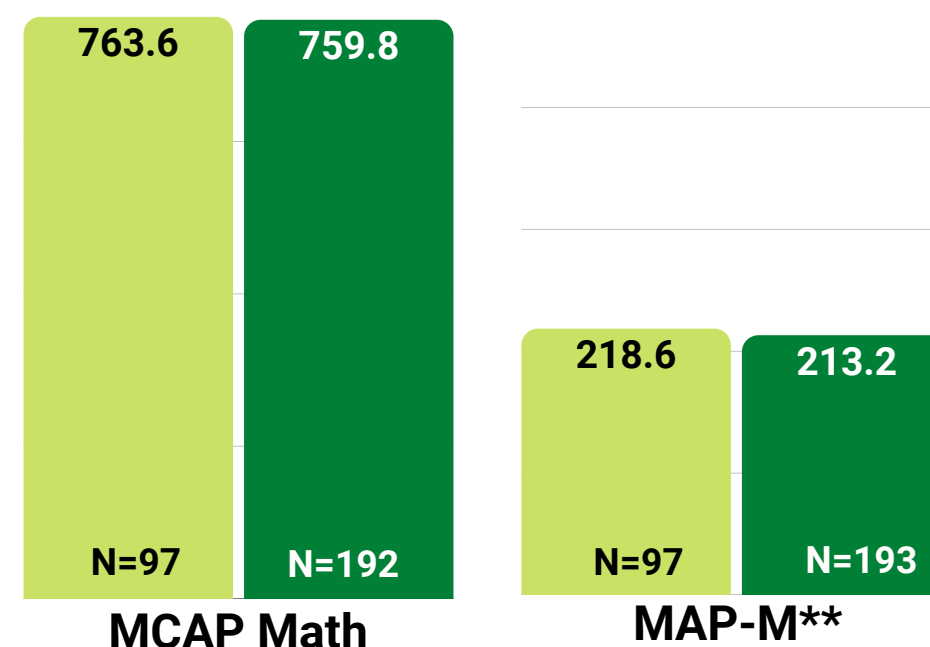
- For Grade 3, the MCAP ELA/L adjusted mean was lower and the MAP-R was higher for the immersion group; however the differences were not statistically significant between the two groups. For math, both MCAP and MAP-M adjusted means were higher among the immersion group; the MAP-M difference was statistically significant.
- For Grade 5, the MCAP ELA/L adjusted mean was lower among the immersion group, but not statistically significant. The adjusted means for MAP-R were virtually the same between the two groups. In math, both MCAP math and MAP-M adjusted means were higher among the immersion group, but neither not statistically significant.

It is also worth noting that although this analysis controlled for student demographics and services, it did not control for prior achievement since immersion students enter the program in Kindergarten. Not having prior achievement (e.g., a pretest) means there is no control for baseline academic ability, which is usually the strongest predictor of post-test scores. There may also be other factors influencing the outcome that are not controlled (e.g., motivation). Therefore, estimates of immersion program effects may reflect unmeasured differences, even with matching and covariate control.

Grade 3 ELA Adjusted Mean Scores Spring 2024

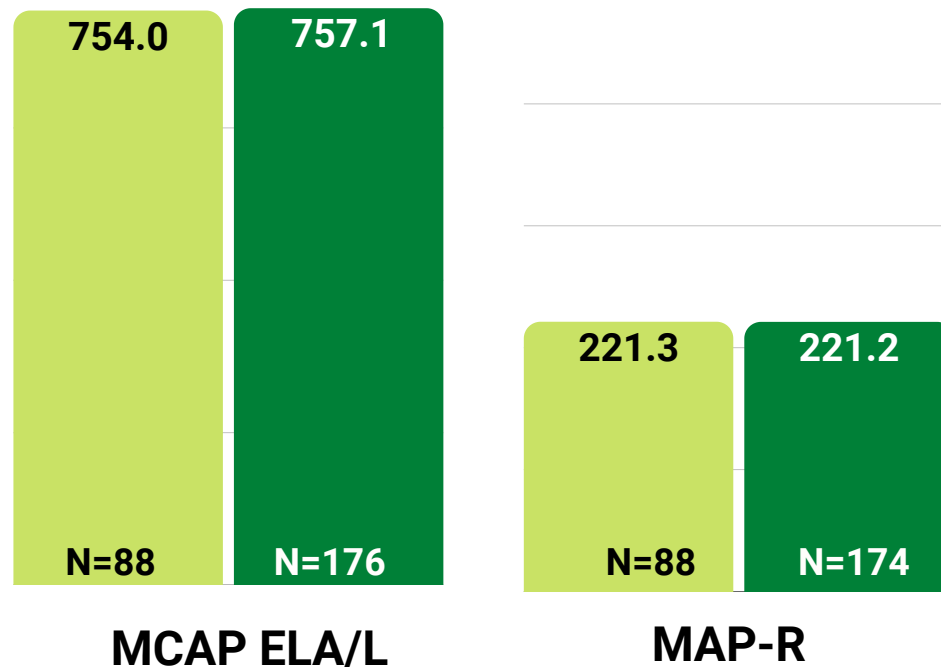


Grade 3 Math Adjusted Mean Scores Spring 2024

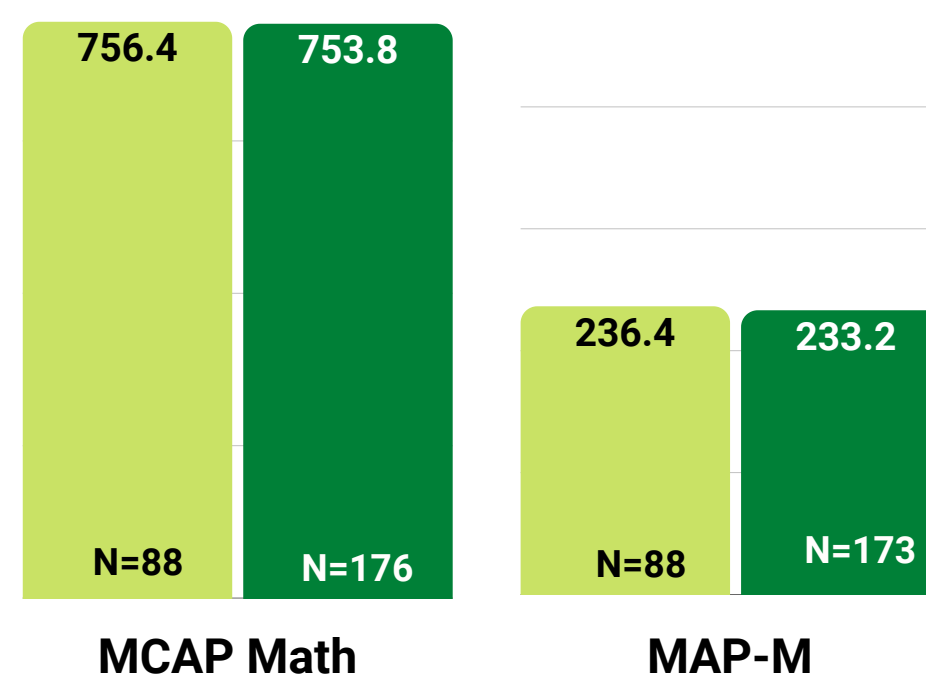


● Immersion Participants ● Comparison Group

Grade 5 ELA Adjusted Mean Scores Spring 2024



Grade 5 Math Adjusted Mean Scores Spring 2024



* p<.05. **p<.01, ***p<.001



Results: Spanish Immersion

Immersion vs. District: Grades 3 and 5



Findings

The percentage of Grade 3 Spanish immersion students meeting proficient levels (a score of 3 or higher) on MCAP and MAP assessments in both English literacy and Math were substantially higher when compared to MCPS in total.

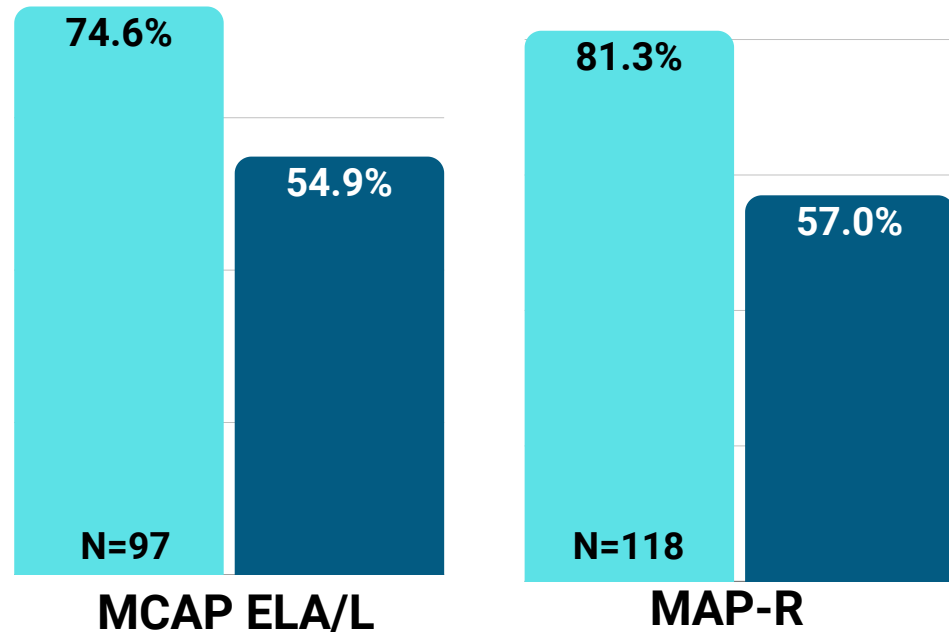
For literacy, 74.6% of Grade 3 immersion students were proficient on MCAP ELA/L compared to 54.9% for the district. Additionally, 81.3% of immersion students were proficient on MAP-R compared to 57% for the district. For math, 72.1% of immersion students were proficient on MCAP and 76.3% were proficient on MAP-M compared to 50.4% and 62% respectively for the district.

The percentage of Grade 5 students meeting proficient levels (a score of 3 or higher) on MCAP and MAP assessments in both ELA/L and Math were higher when compared to MCPS in total, although not as substantial in math.

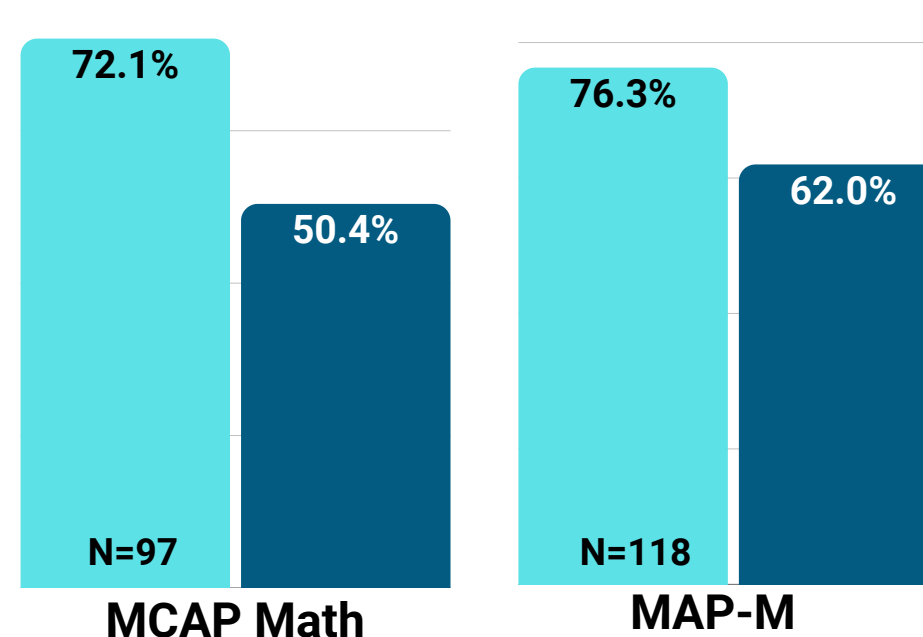
For literacy, 73.2% of Grade 5 immersion students were proficient on MCAP ELA/L compared to 52% for the district. Additionally, 62% of immersion students were proficient on MAP-R compared to 50% for the district. For math, 48.6% of immersion students were proficient on MCAP and 51% were proficient on MAP-M compared to 40.8% and 45% respectively for the district.

Percentages reflect a performance level of 3 or above for MCAP, and an assigned score of 3 or above on MAP using MAP RIT scores and MCPS Evidence of Learning Framework criteria.

Grade 3 ELA Percentage Proficient Spring 2024

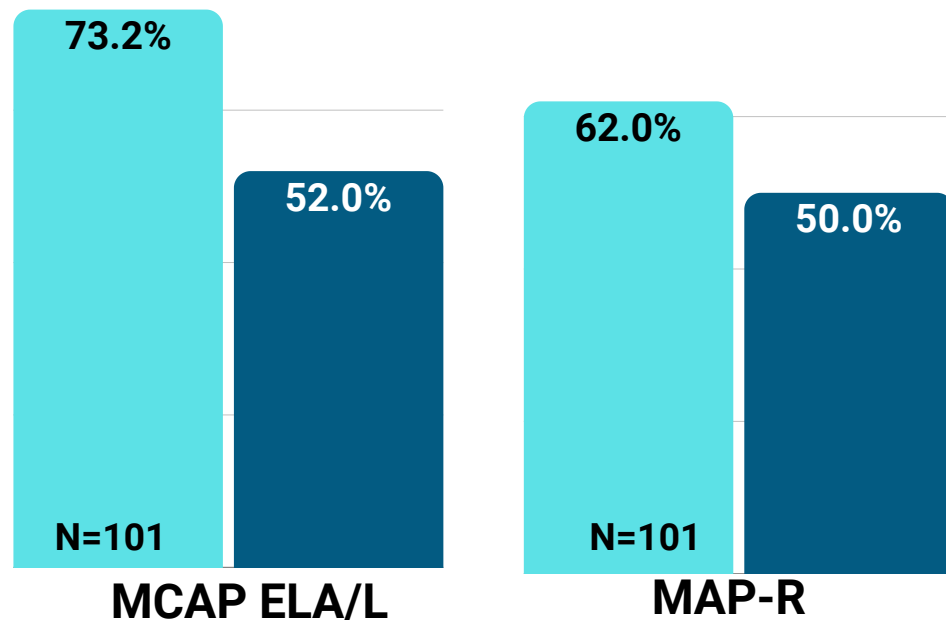


Grade 3 Math Percentage Proficient Spring 2024

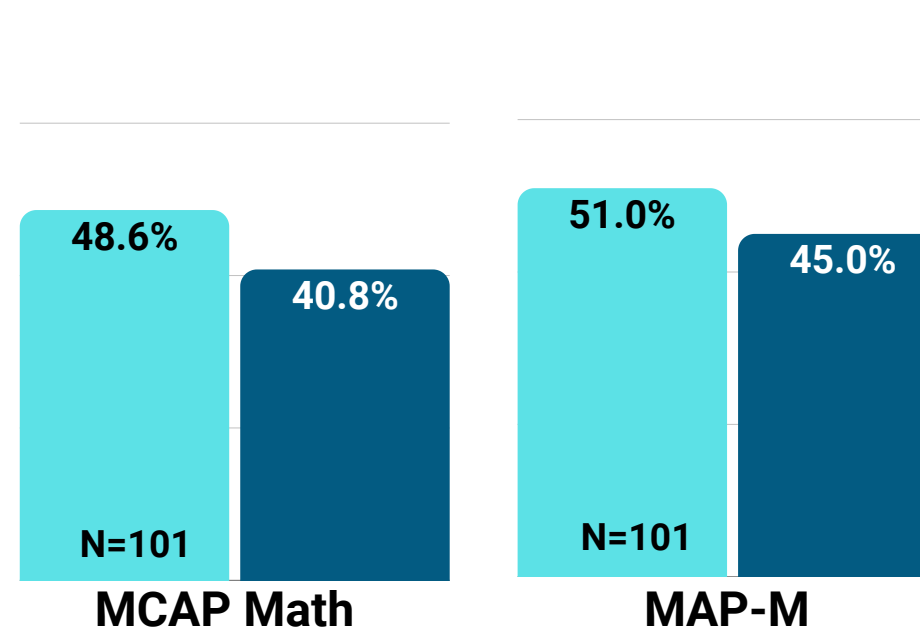


● Immersion Participants ● MCPS

Grade 5 ELA Percentage Proficient Spring 2024



Grade 5 Math Percentage Proficient Spring 2024





Results: Spanish Immersion

Immersion vs. Comparison Group: Grades 3 and 5



Findings

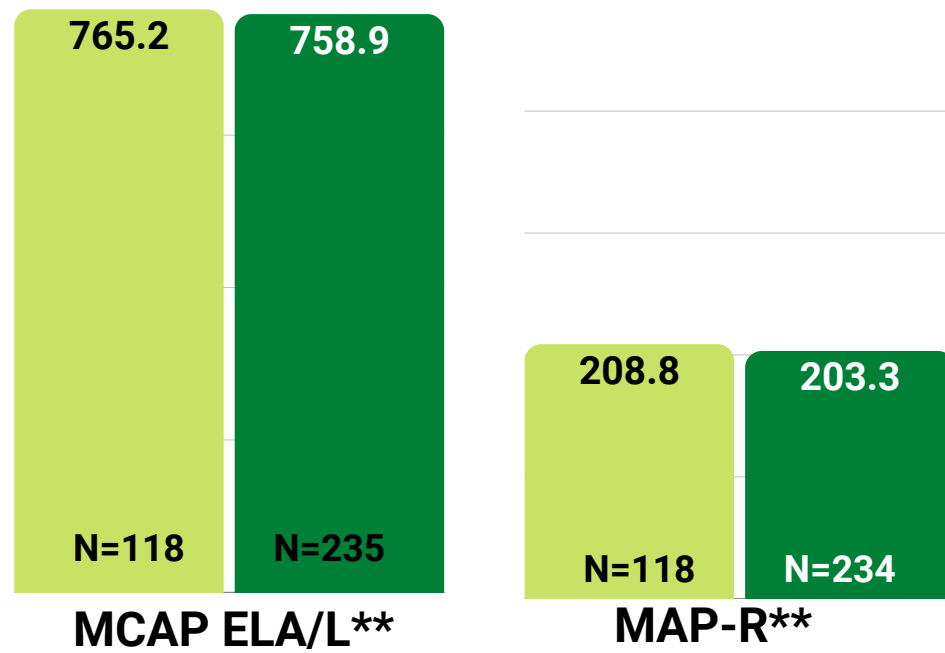
Student performance in English literacy and math among immersion students was compared to a matched comparison group using MCAP scale scores and NWEA MAP RIT scores.

- For Grade 3, both MCAP ELA/L and MAP-R adjusted mean scores were statistically higher for immersion students than the comparison group. For math, performance on MCAP was statistically higher among immersion students, and MAP-M was higher among the immersion group, but not statistically higher.
- For Grade 5, MCAP ELA for immersion students was statistically higher than the comparison group. MAP-R was slightly higher and not statistically significant. For math, MCAP was higher among the immersion group, but not statistically significant and performance on MAP-M was about the same.

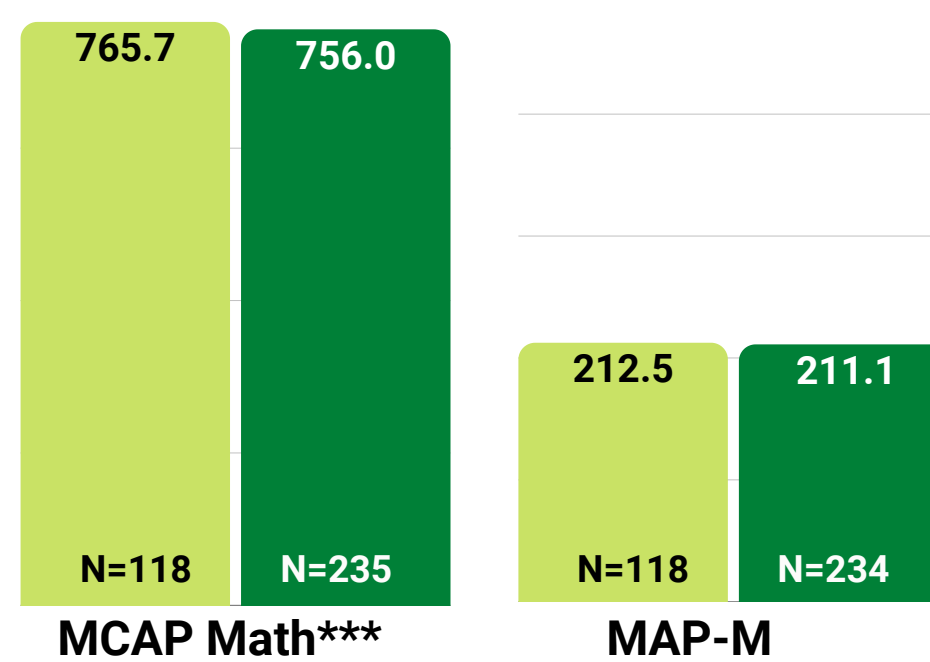
Note that MAP-M was given in Spanish for two of the three schools.

It is also worth noting that although this analysis controlled for student demographics and services, it did not control for prior achievement since immersion students enter the program in Kindergarten. Not having prior achievement (e.g., a pretest) means there is no control for baseline academic ability, which is usually the strongest predictor of post-test scores. There may also be other factors influencing the outcome that are not controlled (e.g., motivation). Therefore, estimates of immersion program effects may reflect unmeasured differences, even with matching and covariate control. 61

Grade 3 ELA Adjusted Mean Scores Spring 2024

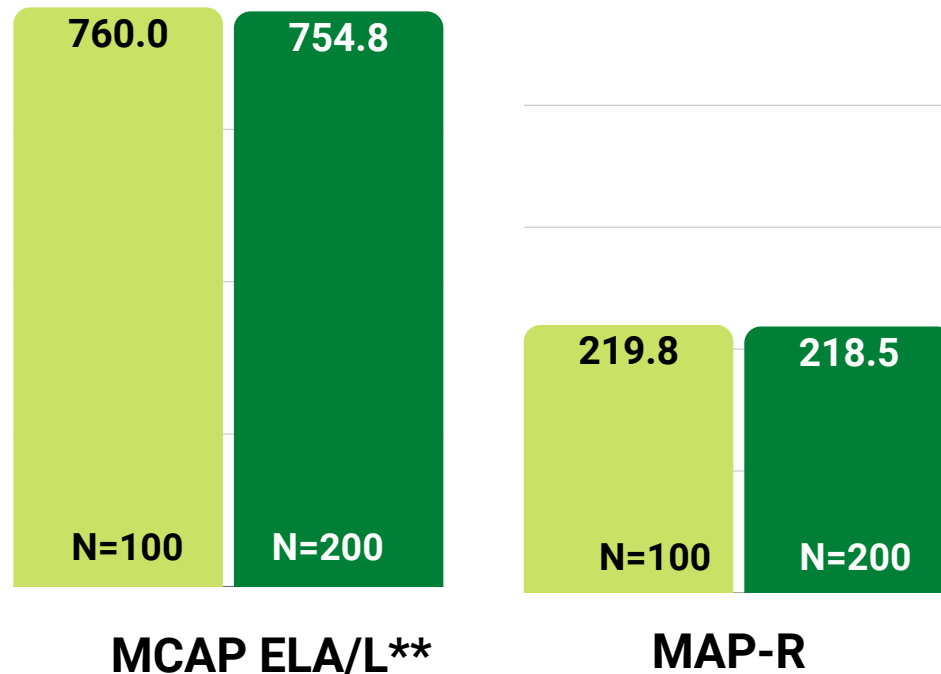


Grade 3 Math Adjusted Mean Scores Spring 2024

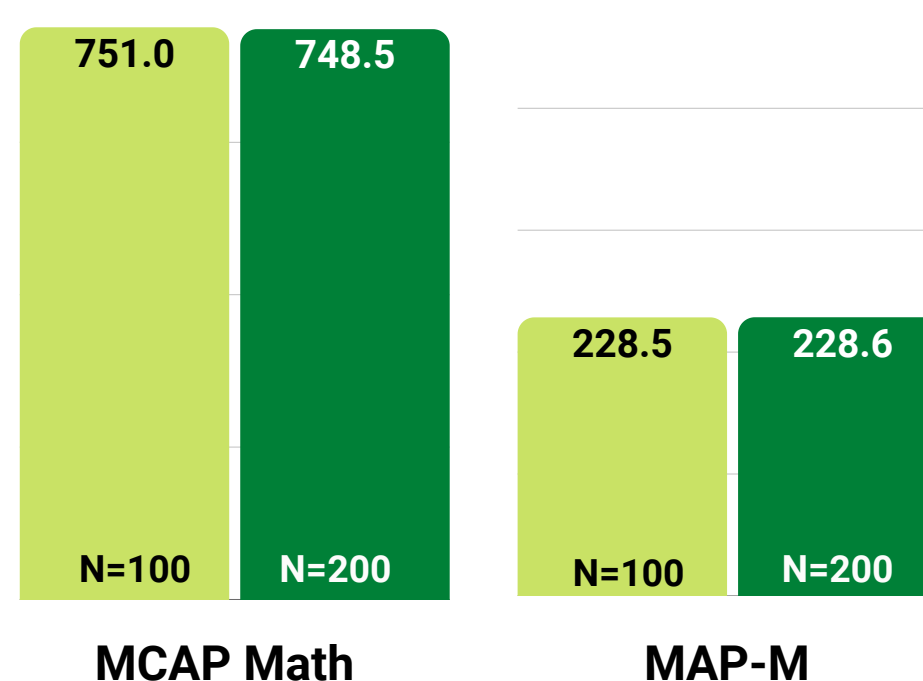


● Immersion Participants ● Comparison Group

Grade 5 ELA Adjusted Mean Scores Spring 2024



Grade 5 Math Adjusted Mean Scores Spring 2024



* p<.05. **p<.01, ***p<.001



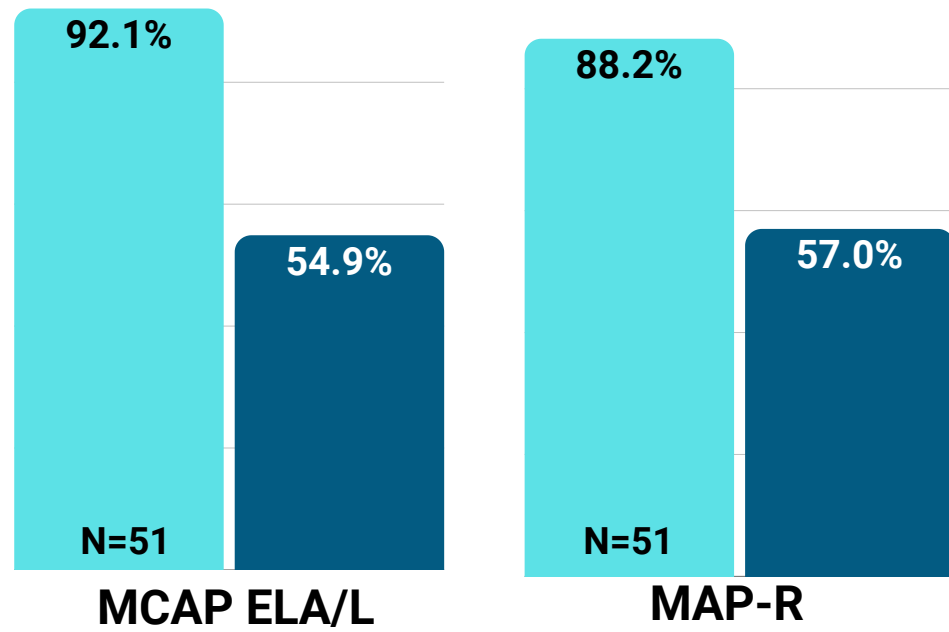
Results: Chinese Immersion

Immersion vs. District: Grades 3 and 5

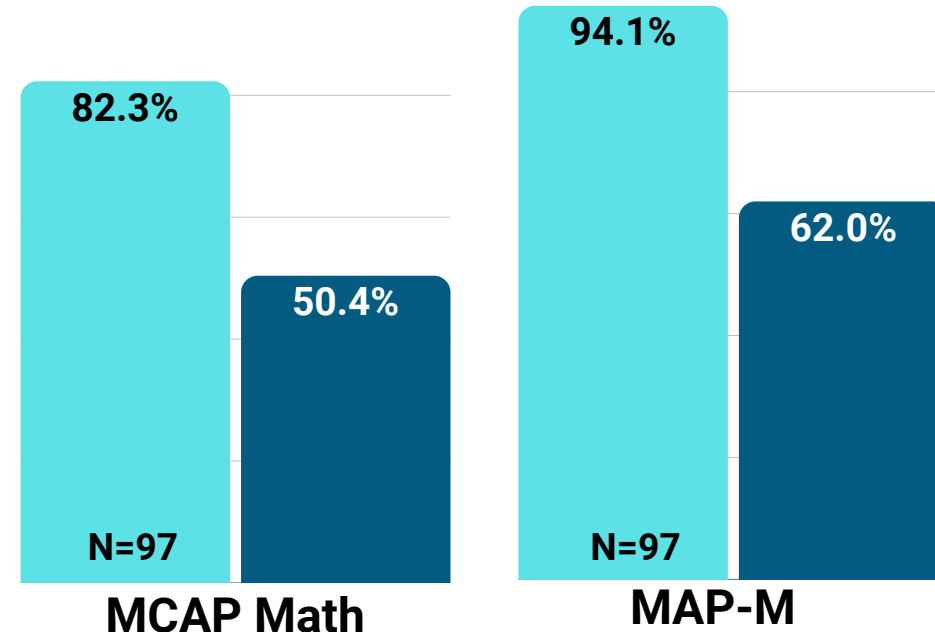


Findings

Grade 3 ELA Percentage Proficient Spring 2024

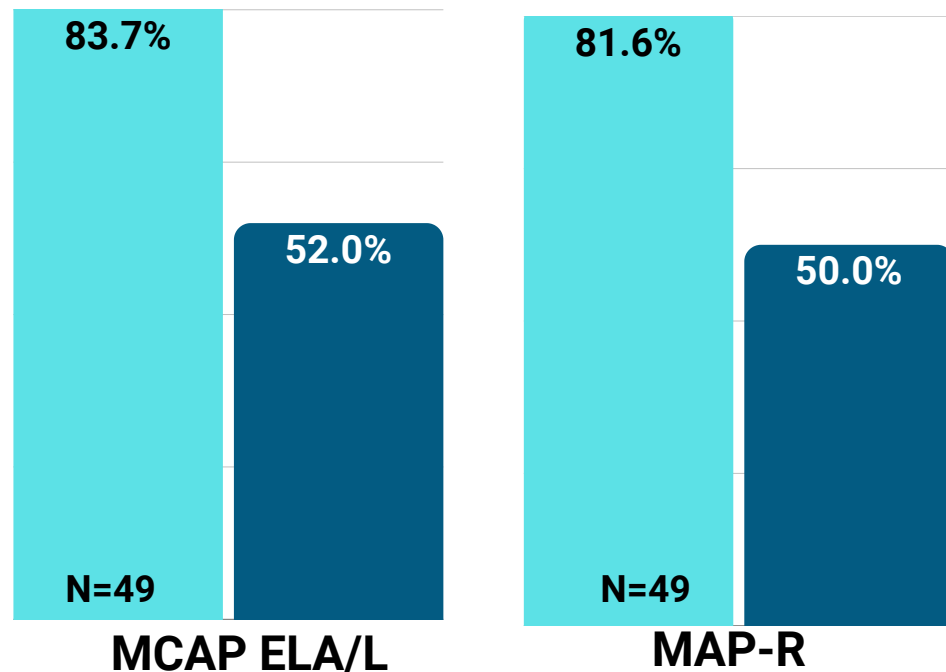


Grade 3 Math Percentage Proficient Spring 2024

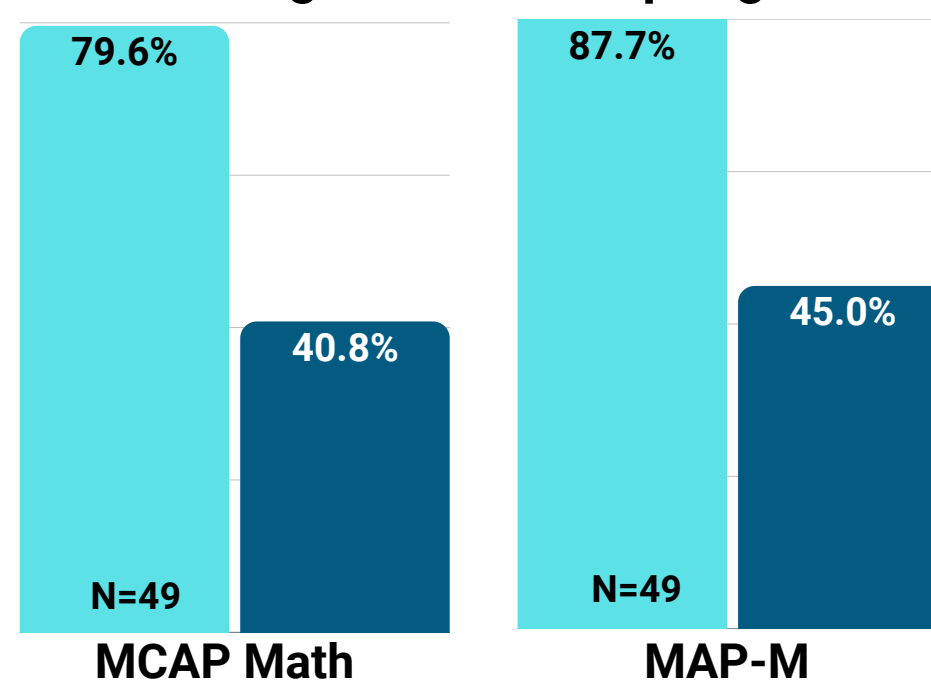


● Immersion Participants ● MCPS

Grade 5 ELA Percentage Proficient Spring 2024



Grade 5 Math Percentage Proficient Spring 2024



The percentage of Grade 3 Chinese immersion students meeting proficient levels (a score of 3 or higher) on MCAP and MAP assessments in both English literacy and Math were substantially higher when compared to MCPS in total.

For literacy, 92.1% of Grade 3 immersion students were proficient on MCAP ELA/L compared to 54.9% for the district. Additionally, 88.2% of immersion students were proficient on MAP-R compared to 57% for the district. For math, 82.3% of immersion students were proficient on MCAP and 94.1% were proficient on MAP-M compared to 50.4% and 62% respectively for the district.

The percentage of Grade 5 students meeting proficient levels (a score of 3 or higher) on MCAP and MAP assessments in both literacy and Math were higher when compared to MCPS in total, although not as substantial in math.

For literacy, 83.7% of Grade 5 immersion students were proficient on MCAP ELA/L compared to 52% for the district. Additionally, 81.6% of immersion students were proficient on MAP-R compared to 50% for the district. For math, 79.6% of immersion students were proficient on MCAP and 87.7% were proficient on MAP-M compared to 40.8% and 45% respectively for the district.

Percentages reflect a performance level of 3 or above for MCAP, and an assigned score of 3 or above on MAP using MAP RIT scores and MCPS Evidence of Learning Framework criteria.



Results: Chinese Immersion

2024 Standardized Assessments: Grades 3 and 5



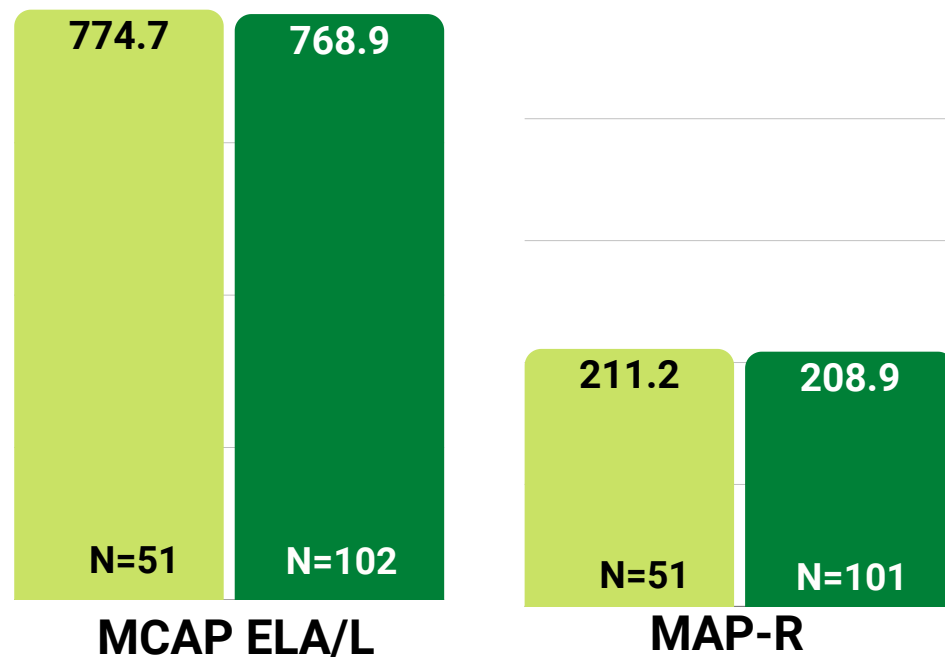
Findings

Although students in the Chinese immersion program only received math and science instruction in Chinese, student performance in both English literacy and math among immersion students was compared to a matched comparison group using MCAP scale scores and NWEA MAP RIT scores.

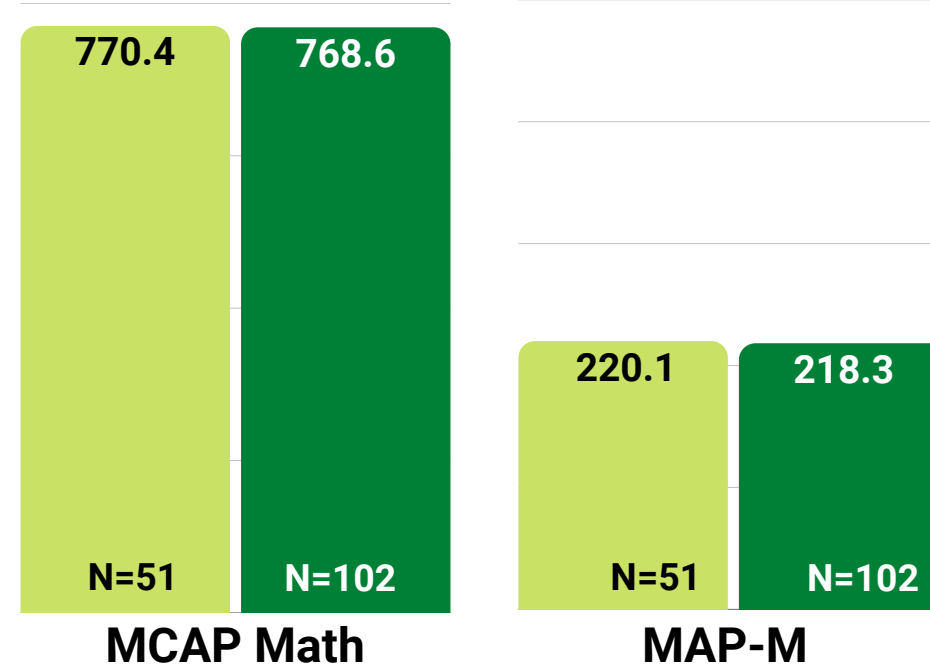
- For Grade 3 literacy, MCAP ELA/L and MAP-R adjusted means were higher among the immersion group; however they were not statistically significant. Similarly for math, both MCAP and MAP-M were higher among the immersion group but not statistically significant.
- For Grade 5, performance on MCAP ELA/L and MAP-R were higher among the immersion group and was statistically significant for MAP-R. For math, the adjusted means for both MCAP and MAP-M were higher among immersion students and both were statistically significant

It is also worth noting that although this analysis controlled for student demographics and services, it did not control for prior achievement since immersion students enter the program in Kindergarten. This means there is no control for baseline academic ability, which is usually the strongest predictor of post-test scores. There may also be other factors influencing the outcome that are not controlled (e.g., motivation). Therefore, estimates of immersion program effects may reflect unmeasured differences, even with matching and covariate control.

Grade 3 ELA Adjusted Mean Scores Spring 2024

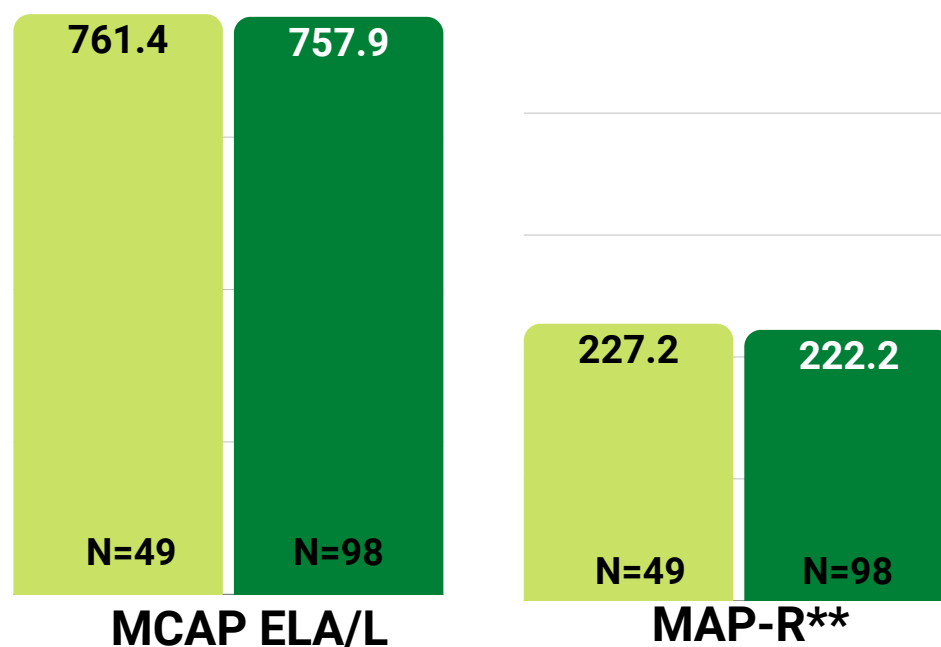


Grade 3 Math Adjusted Mean Scores Spring 2024

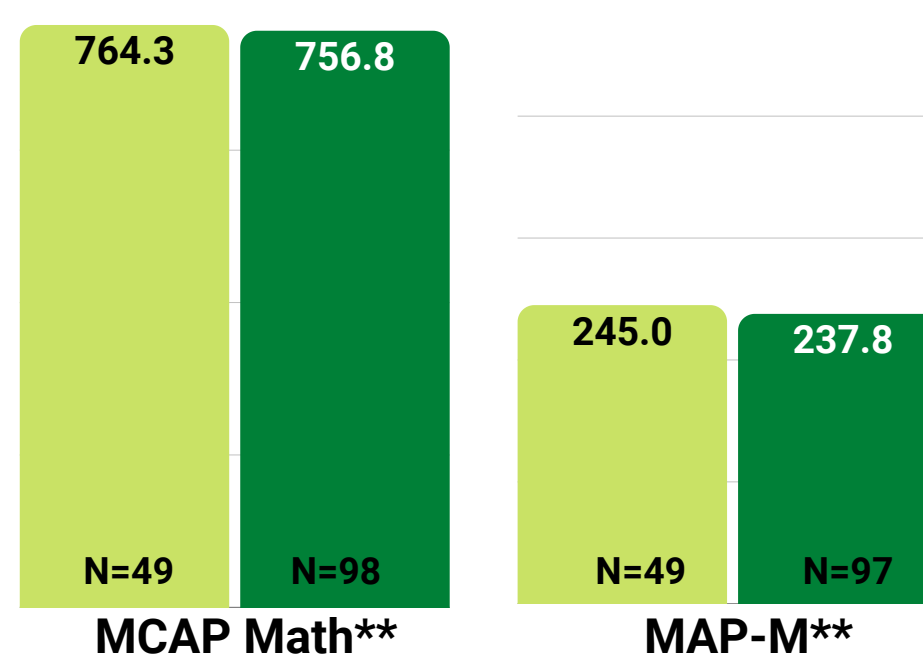


● Immersion Participants ● Comparison Group

Grade 5 ELA Adjusted Mean Scores Spring 2024



Grade 5 Math Adjusted Mean Scores Spring 2024



* p<.05. **p<.01, ***p<.001



Conclusion

Summary and Conclusions of Key Findings

The summary of findings are based on data collected from staff interviews and surveys, parent surveys, document reviews, enrollment data, and standard assessment analysis.

Staff Perceptions of Program Successes

Staff interviews and open-ended survey responses highlighted the following key successes of the immersion programs: *Dedicated Staff and Supportive Community.* Overall, staff across the immersion programs were consistently recognized as dedicated, hardworking, and collaborative educators who go above and beyond to support students. Teachers were praised for their adaptability and strong commitment to student success. Leadership was described by many as highly supportive and advocated for resources. Staff also valued the tight-knit communities and engagement of parents, noting that this collective support strengthens the programs and contributes to their ongoing success.

Other Program or School-related Successes. In addition to emphasizing the dedication of teachers and staff, each immersion program shared examples of unique successes and resources that they believed strengthened their schools. French immersion staff pointed to effective acquired instructional resources such as recent county-purchased decodables and a newly obtained free phonics system, as well as observed student achievement, and the strong use of the French language in classrooms. Spanish immersion staff reported enthusiasm for the new *Arriba la Lectura* curriculum, departmentalization practices among some grade levels that supported instruction and collaboration, academic growth, and an innovative professional development that fostered schoolwide engagement and sharing of best practices. Chinese immersion staff underscored consistent student success in math and listening comprehension, the lasting engagement of alumni, and the broader cultural message the program sends about the value of multilingualism. Collectively, these examples illustrate the diverse ways immersion programs have thrived.

Staff Perceptions of Challenges and Needs

- Through staff interviews and open-ended survey responses, several key challenges emerged across the programs:
- *Challenges with Translated Math, Science, and Social Studies Materials.* A common challenge across all three immersion programs was the shortage of high-quality instructional materials in the target language. Science and Social Studies resources were often unavailable, only partially translated, or error-prone. The Eureka Math curriculum, although provided in all three languages, has for years contained numerous mistakes and awkward translations, causing confusion among students—an issue staff in French and Chinese immersion have repeatedly elevated without resolution. Additionally, some Spanish immersion staff noted that the new language arts curriculum was not designed for language learners, requiring teachers to create supplemental materials. Collectively, these challenges contribute to planning delays, heavier workloads, and a perception that immersion programs are less valued than English-only classrooms.
 - *Lack of Language Arts Curriculum in French.* Staff consistently highlighted the absence of a formal French Language Arts curriculum as a major challenge. Without a standardized curriculum, they rely on prior or piecemeal resources and must spend significant time finding or creating materials to align with standards. This lack of an evidence-based curriculum also impacts consistency and increases workload for teachers.



Conclusion

Summary and Conclusions of Key Findings

Staff Perceptions of Challenges and Needs — Continued

- *Gaps in Assessing and Monitoring in the Target Language.* A key challenge across all three immersion programs was the lack of assessments and benchmarks to monitor progress and measure target-language attainment. Staff noted that the Avant STAMP test had been valuable when used once but has not received ongoing funding. Additionally, French immersion staff reported waiting on district approval of a DIBELS-like assessment for younger students, while Chinese immersion staff pointed to the absence of clear language-attainment goals and noted that additional assessments could place a burden on teachers, since the program design focuses on teaching content in Chinese rather than teaching the language itself.
- *Limited Support for Students.* Immersion staff reported challenges in providing adequate support for students with academic or special needs, citing a shortage of bilingual paraeducators and special education personnel in many schools. Further, support staff are often pulled to other duties. Additionally, special education services are required to be provided in English, which can reduce the effectiveness of learning in the target language. Staff also pointed to disparities between immersion and non-immersion classrooms, with immersion programs sometimes viewed as “enrichment” despite students’ learning needs. Additional concerns included large class sizes, especially in Kindergarten, inconsistent access to classroom support, and a lack of a clear, responsive process for identifying and supporting students with learning challenges.
- *Supporting Students with Chinese Proficiency.* Staff reported that expecting students to develop Chinese proficiency solely through math and science instruction is unrealistic, given the limited instructional time and absence of dedicated language instruction—though this is often a parent expectation. Parents may not fully understand that the program focuses on teaching content through Chinese rather than developing fluency. While it has been suggested to implement daily direct language instruction, staff noted that time is limited, opportunities for practice and vocabulary development are scarce, and students must switch classrooms, ending their Chinese instruction. In one school (Potomac ES), teachers tried to provide about 10 minutes of language instruction per day, but without a textbook or guide, implementation was inconsistent. Moreover, no assessments are available to gauge language attainment or communicate progress to parents.
- *Needed Criteria Policy for Continuation in the Program.* Staff expressed a pressing need for a structured “off-ramp” for students who are not progressing and whose continuation in the program is not what’s best for the student. This concern was paired with a call for greater school-level decision-making authority and the establishment of formal criteria, such as performance-based benchmarks, to determine student success and eligibility to continue in the program.
- *Need for Immersion-Specific Professional Development.* Staff in the French and Spanish programs expressed the need for targeted PD and support, including greater consistency across schools. Also, Spanish staff welcomed the new Arriba curriculum but described minimal training and unclear guidance.



Conclusion

Summary and Conclusions of Key Findings

Teacher Survey Feedback

When reviewing percentages from the teacher survey, it is important to note that sample sizes are small due to the limited population of immersion teachers and the smaller number of survey respondents. Only a few Chinese immersion teachers participated from the already small teacher population, so their results could not be reported separately for that immersion program. Additionally, responses from open-ended survey questions were combined with interview data to report the themes of successes and challenges.

Overall satisfaction with the programs was strong. All French immersion teachers reported being satisfied, with 50% indicating they were very satisfied, and a high majority of Spanish immersion teachers (88%) also expressed satisfaction. Both French and Spanish teachers reported implementing math and language arts extremely or very well (92% and 88% for language arts, respectively, and 100% for math). Additionally, 97% of teachers in both programs reported speaking in their target language. Assessments of student progress in math and literacy also received high marks, though higher in math (100% French and 93% Spanish for math; 84% French and 71% Spanish for language arts). Notably, fewer teachers felt students received support services as needed (23% of French teachers and 47% of Spanish teachers).

Satisfaction with instructional materials varied by subject. For math, all Spanish immersion teachers (100%) and most French immersion teachers (85%) were satisfied, though a higher percentage of Spanish teachers reported being “very satisfied” (64% vs. 8%). For language arts, 82% of Spanish teachers were satisfied compared to 46% of French teachers. Satisfaction was lower for social studies (67% Spanish vs. 27% French) and science (56% Spanish vs. 39% French). Both groups generally agreed they received adequate support from school staff (100% French and 89% Spanish); however, fewer felt professional learning adequately prepared them (75% French and 67% Spanish) or that district-level staff provided sufficient support for program implementation (39% French and 56% Spanish).

Parent Survey Feedback

The parent survey, with a 46% response rate, showed that most households spoke English at home: 94% of French, 93% of Spanish, and 84% of Chinese immersion families. About one-quarter to one-third of parents also spoke the target language at home (French 25%, Spanish 33%, Chinese 33%).

Most parents reported that MCPS provides helpful resources to learn about the program (86% French immersion, 79% Spanish, 71% Chinese). Across programs, parents also felt well informed about their child’s schedule (90%–92%) and knew who to contact with questions (84%–95%). Resources to support their child’s learning were reported highest in French (83%) and Spanish (80%), but lower in Chinese (64%). Parents of Spanish immersion students were most likely to report their child received practice materials (90%), compared to 83% in French and 66% in Chinese. Satisfaction with communication about academic progress was highest among parents in French immersion (86%), followed by Spanish (83%) and Chinese (70%).



Conclusion

Summary and Conclusions of Key Findings

Parent Survey Feedback—Continued

Overall, most parents across all three immersion programs reported being satisfied and would recommend the program to others. Satisfaction was highest in the French (95%) and Spanish (93%) immersion programs, while Chinese immersion had a slightly lower—but still majority—satisfaction rate of 77%. Recommendation rates were similarly high (89%–97%), with stronger endorsement among parents of French and Spanish immersion students. Intentions to continue through middle school were also high (82%–90%) and highest among Chinese immersion parents. Notably, intent in the Spanish and Chinese programs decreased as the student grade levels progressed.

When asked to describe any concerns they had with the immersion program, the most common theme was academic, including support for struggling learners, English development, and target language acquisition (reported most strongly by parents of Chinese immersion students). Other concerns included staffing, sibling enrollment, communication, and concerns with the continuation in middle and high school. When asked what they liked the most about the program, parents most often mention was the dedicated teachers and staff, along with benefits such as the immersion community, language progress, academic rigor (especially in French and Spanish), and the opportunity the program provides for their child.

Enrollment Characteristics and Continuation to Middle School

In 2024–2025, enrollment was 574 in French immersion, 670 in Spanish immersion, and 297 in Chinese immersion. Enrollment by race/ethnicity and FARMS status varies across immersion programs and individual schools. Overall, the French immersion program had 574 enrolled students and was primarily White (42.9%), followed by Black or African American (22.8%) and Hispanic/Latino (15.5%), with 15.5% of students receiving FARMS services. The Spanish immersion program had 670 students and was primarily Hispanic/Latino (35.7%) and White (33.1%), followed by Black or African American (17.8%), with 12.8% of students receiving FARMS services. The Chinese immersion program had 297 students enrolled and was primarily Asian (42.1%), followed by students identifying as Two or More Races (20.9%) and White (19.9%), with 9.8% receiving FARMS services.

Most immersion students continued into middle school immersion after Grade 5 in both 2023–2024 and 2024–2025, although Spanish immersion showed a decrease in 2024–2025, likely due to changes in program articulation at the middle school level. Specifically, 61.2% and 72.4% of French immersion students, 83.1% and 63.3% of Spanish immersion students, and 79.6% and 80% of Chinese immersion students advanced to their middle school immersion programs. Among those who did not continue, most enrolled in Level 1 or 2 of the same target language, while some switched to a different language, at their home middle school or a magnet middle school. French immersion had the highest percentage of students not continuing with any language (15.3% and 14.9%), compared to 6.7% and 8.2% of Spanish immersion students and 0% and 8.9% of Chinese immersion students.



Conclusion

Summary and Conclusions of Key Findings

Student Achievement Outcomes

Grade 3 and Grade 5 immersion students outperformed the district in both English literacy and math on Spring 2024 MCAP and MAP Growth assessments, often by substantial margins. Among Grade 5 students, French immersion proficiency was 62.5% on MCAP ELA/L and 70.4% on MAP-R, with math proficiency at 62.5% (MCAP) and 69.3% (MAP-M), compared to districtwide averages of 52% (MCAP ELA/L), 50% (MAP-R), 40.8% (MCAP Math), and 45% (MAP-M). Spanish immersion students had 73.2% proficiency on MCAP ELA/L and 62% on MAP-R, with 48.6% (MCAP) and 51.0% (MAP-M) in math, exceeding the district averages in both subjects. Chinese immersion students showed the highest proficiency, with 83.7% on MCAP ELA/L and 81.6% on MAP-R, and 79.6% (MCAP Math) and 87.7% (MAP-M) in math, well above districtwide performance.

Student performance in literacy and math among immersion students was compared to a matched comparison group using MCAP scale scores and NWEA MAP RIT scores, while controlling for student demographics and service receipt. It is worth noting that, although this analysis used scale scores and control variables, it did not account for prior achievement or other possible influencing factors, such as motivation or parental support. Adjusted means were compared between immersion students and the matched comparison group for 2024 MCAP (scale scores) and NWEA MAP (RIT scores). Immersion students generally performed as well or better than their matched peers, with the most notable advantages observed in literacy for Spanish immersion and in Grade 5 math for Chinese immersion. No results indicated significantly lower performance among the immersion group.

French Immersion: In Grade 3, immersion students had higher adjusted means in math for both MCAP Math and MAP-M, with MAP-M statistically significant, while English literacy scores were mixed and not significant. For Grade 5, immersion students scored higher in math but differences were not statistically significant; literacy scores were slightly lower or similar and not statistically significant.

Spanish Immersion: Grade 3 immersion students outperformed their matched peers on MCAP ELA/L and MAP-R, with statistically higher scores. For math, MCAP Math was also statistically higher; MAP-M was only slightly higher (not statistically significant). In Grade 5, performance on MCAP ELA/L was higher and statistically significant among the immersion group, while MAP-R and math scores were slightly higher or similar but not statistically significant.

Chinese Immersion: For Grade 3, immersion students had higher adjusted means in both English literacy and math, though differences were not statistically significant. In Grade 5, immersion students scored higher in all areas, with MAP-R and both MCAP Math and MAP-M results statistically significant.



Recommendations



The following recommendations are based on findings collected from this evaluation. These recommendations aim to optimize the implementation of immersion programs and student success.

1 Implement Target Language Assessments and Improve Consistency of District Required Assessments

The immersion programs should be provided the needed tools to effectively measure students' progress in attaining the target language. Standardized assessments are essential to understanding growth in the target language, tracking student proficiency, evaluating program effectiveness, and keeping parents informed. Targeted language assessments would also help teachers tailor instruction, identify students needing extra support, and ensure alignment with attaining biliteracy. Resources such as the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Proficiency Guidelines and the Maryland Seal of Biliteracy's list of approved World Language Assessments could serve as useful references, while also providing benchmarks for comparison with immersion programs nationally.

Additionally, greater alignment is needed across immersion schools regarding the district's required assessments. Clear and consistent guidelines should be provided about the language in which assessments should be administered. For example, in the Spanish immersion program, the language used for some grade level assessments varied from school to school (e.g., Math 4/5 district assessments, MAP-P, MAP-M).

2 Provide a French Immersion Language Arts Curriculum and Translated Instructional Resources for All Programs

The French immersion program has never had a dedicated language arts and literacy curriculum, relying instead on resources pieced together by team leaders and teachers. With the district's adoption of a new ELA curriculum (Amplify CKLA), immersion teachers are now further limited in their ability to plan with grade-level peers. Providing an evidence-based curriculum would equip French immersion teachers with stronger tools for student success, ensure consistency across classrooms, and reduce the burden on staff to find or create instructional materials.

In addition, all three immersion programs require timely, vetted instructional materials in math, science, and social studies. While translated lessons are provided, staff reported that many are incomplete, not available, or contain errors (particularly Eureka Math translated materials), limiting their effectiveness and increasing the work load for teachers to adapt and supplement as needed.

3 Offer Targeted Professional Learning Opportunities to Immersion Staff

Staff in the Spanish and French immersion programs emphasized the need for PD specifically designed for immersion instruction, including strategies for teaching in the target language, facilitating cross-linguistic connections, and developing oral language proficiency. They also highlighted the importance of increased opportunities to collaborate with other immersion teachers within the district and statewide. Continued professional learning will not only strengthen instruction but also promote systematic, consistent implementation of best practices. Additionally, Spanish immersion staff reported a need for more training and guidance related to the new Spanish language arts curriculum. It was noted that participation in prior PD opportunities was low because they were voluntary and provided neither a stipend nor credit. It was also noted that it is a challenge to get substitute coverage in the target language.



4

Review Immersion Program Enrollment and Continuation Procedures, Along with Goal Alignment

Staff feedback and program data highlighted several aspects of the immersion programs that warrant review and potential modification.

- *Establish clear criteria for student success and continuation in the program.* Provide schools with evidence-based and researched-based benchmarks and criteria to determine whether students are progressing adequately and should remain in the program. At the same time, grant schools greater authority to make student-level decisions, recognizing that some children may be better served outside of immersion. Both staff and parent feedback emphasized that current structures make it difficult to support students with academic or special needs. Since students enter the program via lottery and at a young age (Kindergarten or Grade 1), before needs may be identified, programs would benefit from a clear and responsive “exit ramp” process.
- *Continue conversations around the sibling factor included in the lottery selection process.* The sibling factor was put into place because the automatic entry of siblings was resulting in a high percentage of sibling enrollment, creating a barrier to access for other students. The current process instead gives those with an enrolled older sibling extra weight in the lottery. However, parents have expressed that this places strain on families—not only due to having children enrolled in schools located in different areas, but also the emotional stress and sense of division it can cause among siblings when one is admitted and another is not. The restriction of not allowing automatic enrollment for a younger sibling may also have the unintended consequence of discouraging families from applying at all, given the challenges of transportation to central bus stops and managing multiple schools.
- *Reassess whether programs are being accessed as intended.* Applicants after Grade 1 must pass a proficiency assessment in the target language to ensure they can succeed without the foundational instruction in early years. While this supports student success, it may also shift program demographics in ways that diverge from original goals of promoting racial and ethnic diversity. For example, in one countywide Spanish immersion school, Hispanic representation was higher in Grades 3–5 (44%) than in K–2 (36%). Similarly, in one Chinese immersion school, Asian student representation increased from 43% (K–2) to 47% (Grades 3–5). Parent survey data also show that many families speak the target language at home (Spanish 28%, French 21%, Chinese 20%), suggesting that immersion enrollment, or later-entry proficiency requirements, may disproportionately benefit heritage speakers. Careful consideration is needed to ensure access remains aligned with program goals, including a clear determination of what those intended goals should be.
- *Reexamine the goals and design of the Chinese partial immersion program.* Building on this need for clarity, the specific goals and intended outcomes of the Chinese immersion program merit closer review. Currently, the partial immersion program in Chinese focuses on language development through math and science instruction, with no direct language arts curriculum in the target language. Some staff and parents expressed concern that students are not achieving sufficient proficiency, raising questions about whether partial immersion without explicit language instruction can meet intended outcomes. Incorporating tools to measure progress and proficiency, as recommended earlier, will be critical in guiding this discussion.



Recommendations



5 Consider Expanding the Team Leader Role

All three administrators of the Spanish immersion program recommended some type of expansion to the team leader role, ranging from making the position full-time, extending responsibilities into the summer months, to providing a stipend. Team leaders clearly serve as the primary managers of the immersion programs, working with central office to fill enrollment vacancies, overseeing instruction, and communicating with parents. One administrator noted that team leaders are part of the ILT and make decisions affecting half of the school, and therefore the role should be formally recognized and compensated. While this expansion was suggested specifically for the Spanish immersion program, consideration should also be given to the other immersion programs.

6 Plan a Future Evaluation of Middle School Immersion Programs and Student Biliteracy Pathways

The scope of this evaluation was limited to the elementary level; however, immersion programs also exist at the middle school level. It is recommended that a similar evaluation be conducted at the middle school level to provide additional insights into program effectiveness. Furthermore, a closer examination of immersion student pathways and experiences would help clarify the full benefits of the program; however, prior immersion enrollment data would need to be available in order to conduct this analysis.



PROCEED WITH CAUTION

Despite strong support for immersion programs from staff and parents, high demand as evidenced by waitlists, and outcome analyses showing that immersion students perform at or above the level of their peers, there is a critical need to strengthen several key areas to better support program goals, student success, and consistency. Importantly, standardized assessments are needed to measure students' attainment of the target language and evaluate program effectiveness. Additionally, immersion schools should be provided with accurate and timely instructional resources in the target language, including a French language arts curriculum, and the supports necessary to deliver a high-quality immersion education. Finally, an updated review of each program's goals and expected outcomes, particularly the partial Chinese immersion program, is recommended to ensure program structures are fully aligned.



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