

Immersion Programs in Portland Public Schools

Questions & Answers

Q: *What is an immersion program?*

A: An immersion program is a form of dual language education that offers core academic content in two languages: English and the targeted immersion language. PPS has immersion programs in four languages: Spanish, Japanese, Mandarin Chinese and Russian. The goal is for all students to become bilingual and bi-literate while achieving at a high academic level and developing deeper cultural awareness.

The percentage of time spent learning in each language depends on the program model. Two-Way immersion programs aim to serve both minority language and majority language students, utilizing both groups as native speaker models. One-Way or Foreign Language immersion programs primarily serve English native speakers.

Q: *Do immersion programs span grades K–12?*

A: Yes. Students may transfer into an immersion program as early as kindergarten (pre-kindergarten in some cases), and have a right to remain in the program through their senior year of high school. Currently, there are district-wide immersion programs for Japanese, Mandarin Chinese and Russian. Spanish immersion programs are located in four regions of the district, and students are encouraged to apply for the program closest to their home. Beginning with 9th grade in 2014, students who have been in an immersion program outside of their home region will be assigned to their regional high school to continue immersion. (See chart below.)

Q: *Where are the programs located?*

A: PPS District-Wide and Regional Immersion Programs

Language	Region*	Elementary School	Middle School	High School
Spanish	West	Ainsworth (T)	West Sylvan	Lincoln
Spanish	Southeast	Atkinson	Mt. Tabor	Franklin
Spanish	North	Beach	Beach	Roosevelt
Spanish	Southeast	Bridger	Bridger	Franklin
Spanish	North	Cesar Chavez	Cesar Chavez	Roosevelt
Russian	District-wide	Kelly	Lane	Franklin
Spanish	Southeast	Lent	Lent	Franklin
Japanese	District-wide	Richmond (T)	Mt. Tabor	Grant
Spanish	Northeast	Rigler	Rigler	Madison
Mandarin	District-wide	Woodstock (T)	Hosford	Cleveland

* Regions serve the following high school clusters: Southeast – Cleveland and Franklin; Northeast – Madison, Grant and eastern portion of Jefferson; North – Roosevelt and northern portion of Jefferson; West – Lincoln and Wilson.

(T) Kindergarten tuition or scholarship is required for the second half of the day.

Q: *How do I apply for my student to participate in an immersion program?*

A: Families must submit a School Choice Application during the annual transfer cycle. Applications may be submitted online at www.schoolchoice.pps.k12.or.us or delivered to (a) the Enrollment and Transfer Center, 501 N. Dixon St., first floor, room 140.

Most immersion programs have other entry requirements as well, including attendance at a mandatory meeting and a signed statement of understanding. Students applying for “late entry” (after kindergarten) must contact the school for language assessment information. Learn more about entry requirements at www.schoolchoice.pps.k12.or.us, or contact the schools or the Enrollment and Transfer Center.

Q: *What is the timeline for the School Choice student transfer process?*

A: School Choice/Transfer Cycle Information for 2012-13

Important Dates	Start Date/Time	End Date/Time
High School Transfer Application Cycle	February 3, 2012 8:00 a.m.	February 29, 2012 5:00 p.m.
Elementary/Middle School Transfer Application Cycle	February 10, 2012 8:00 a.m.	March 09, 2012 5:00 p.m.

Q: *I can't make it to the mandatory informational session. What do I do?*

A: Contact the school prior to the School Choice application deadline.

Q: *Can a student enroll in an immersion program if a sibling is already enrolled in that program?*

A: Co-enrolled preference is given to students who have siblings enrolled in the same immersion program.

Q: *My third-grade student is attending the neighborhood non-immersion program. I want my child entering kindergarten at the same school to participate in its immersion program. Will this child receive sibling preference?*

A: No. Sibling preference only applies to children with a sibling enrolled in the same immersion program, even if the program shares space with a neighborhood school.

Q: *Do I need to apply in the lottery for transfer if my student will be moving from elementary to middle or middle to high school?*

A: No. Immersion students are automatically promoted to the next level of their designated immersion program. However, a lottery application is required if a student is interested in switching into a different program. Beginning in 2014, students who wish to attend a high school program that is outside their region will need approval through the lottery, as well.

Q: *How are lottery slots determined for immersion programs?*

A: Space for lottery transfers is determined every year based on the number of students needed to maintain a robust program and the amount of classrooms available in a school to serve that program.

Q: *What if my student decides not to continue in an immersion program?*

A: There are two ways that students can request a program change: 1. Students who wish to change programs for the next school year must apply in the annual lottery. On-time lottery applicants are guaranteed a space at their neighborhood school, however, approval to any other school or program is based on a student's lottery number and space availability. 2. Students who are experiencing an urgent hardship may request a program change for the same school year by filing a petition in the Enrollment & Transfer Center.

Q: *How does a student enter an immersion program after kindergarten?*

A: Students requesting entrance to an immersion program after kindergarten are referred to as "late entry." Late entry is possible at any grade if space is available in the requested program and IF the student meets minimum oral and written language proficiency requirements. To determine whether your student meets minimum language proficiency requirements please contact the school directly for assessment, at least two weeks prior to the School Choice application deadline.

Q: *Does living in the school's neighborhood increase my child's chances of gaining entrance into the program?*

A: Most immersion programs offer neighborhood families a priority in the lottery process. Most — but not all — programs also have space available for students who live outside the neighborhood. The Richmond Japanese School is a district-wide program that does not have a neighborhood attendance area, so there is no preference for students who live near that school.

Q: *Can a "nonresident" student who lives outside Portland Public Schools boundaries in another school district, city, state or country apply for an immersion program during the School Choice transfer cycle, for the following school year?*

A: Yes. Students who are not PPS residents can apply to an immersion program or any school in the district. District families are considered first in the lottery, so nonresident students have less of a chance of being accepted. If selected, nonresident students are conditionally approved until the resident district approves an interdistrict transfer or tuition is paid. Interdistrict agreements must be renewed annually by PPS and the resident district.

Q: *I do not currently reside in the Portland Public Schools boundaries but plan to move within the district boundaries before the first day of school. Will my student be considered a "resident" in the School Choice lottery process?*

A: Under certain circumstances, a student may be considered "resident" in the School Choice process, but can only be "conditionally" approved if selected in the lottery. Please contact the Enrollment & Transfer Center for more information.