

**Heritage Language Literacy Club at Bailey's Elementary School
Fairfax County Public Schools
K-12 Program**

Background Information

Institution: Bailey's Elementary School

Program address: 6111 Knollwood Drive, Falls Church, VA 22041

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Contact Person:

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Type of institution: Elementary School

Grades taught: 1-12

Languages/dialects taught: Spanish

Program Description

Purposes and goals of the program:

- All participants will feel an increased sense of pride in their native language and heritage, solidarity with, and desire to contribute positively to their community.
- Students will increase and maintain literacy skills in their native language in order to preserve the home language and culture, acquire English more easily, and ensure success in school.

- Young adult tutors will increase their awareness of college and career options and the value of bilingualism in varied career paths.
- Tutors will be encouraged to hold high educational and career aspirations, to plan and save for their futures, and to stay in school and continue with post-secondary education.
- Hispanic parents will become more involved in the education of their children.

Type of program: The Heritage Language Literacy Club (HLLC) provides literacy instruction after school for students in grades 1-5, while providing community service opportunities and job experience in a supportive environment for tutors in grades 6-12.

Mission statement: The mission of the Heritage Language Literacy Club at Bailey's Elementary School is to promote the social and academic development of culturally diverse students, particularly students from immigrant backgrounds. The program focuses primarily on increasing native language literacy, promoting the positive aspects of bilingualism, and mentoring bilingual students toward finishing school and becoming skilled multilingual professionals.

Program origin: The program was founded in 1999 by Regla Armengol with a grant she was given as the Fairfax County Public Schools Teacher of the Year. The program is funded through in-kind support from Fairfax County Public Schools, Title III funds, grants from corporations and foundations, and individual donations.

Parents' expectations for the program: Parents expect that their children will be cared for after school in a positive, constructive environment, where they can maintain and develop their native language.

Instructors' and administration's expectations for the program: School staff and program staff expect that students will be mentored by positive role models from their own ethnic background. Students participating in the HLLC are expected to develop native language literacy skills and transfer these skills to the study of English, thereby experiencing greater success in school.

Students

Countries of origin: Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Cuba, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua, Peru, Puerto Rico, and the United States.

Total student enrollment: 350 students

How the program identifies heritage speakers: Participants self-identify.

How the program determines the language background and language proficiency of students: Running records, work samples, and classroom observation

Percentage of students who complete the program: Unknown

Percentage of students who continue to study the heritage language after completing the program: Unknown

Possible reasons for student withdrawal: The school population has a high rate of transience, and many students move away before they have a chance to complete the program.

Students' attitudes toward the language varieties they speak: Students' attitudes vary from negative to receptive to strong advocacy of the native language.

Instructors

Number of instructors in the program: 14

Languages in which instructors are proficient: English, Spanish, Arabic, German, French

Credentials: Teachers are certified (in Virginia and other states) in elementary education, Spanish, and foreign language teaching. Instructors have Bachelor's degrees in education, languages, business administration, economics, cultural studies, humanities; and Master of Arts degrees in bilingual education, education curriculum and instruction, and human development/child study.

Professional development opportunities for instructors: Many opportunities are provided at the county and school level, as well as program-specific professional development.

Instruction

Total contact hours per week: 2 ¼ hours

Student grouping: Students are grouped by grade level.

Language skills

Skills developed by the program: Listening, speaking, reading, and writing in Spanish

Levels of language proficiency reached by the end of the program: Levels of language proficiency reached are varied and based on students' levels of proficiency at program entry.

Comments: Although all instruction takes place in Spanish, it is understood that learned skills transfer to English.

Culture

Aspects of culture taught:

- History
- Festivals
- Customs
- Traditions and beliefs
- Social and cultural norms
- Songs and dances
- Folktales
- Literature
- Poetry
- Family stories

Kind of student identity fostered by program: The program fosters positive identification with students' Hispanic heritage as well as a desire to help others in the community develop their skills.

Methodologies:

Methodologies and instructional strategies used in the program:

- Guided reading
- Read alouds
- Shared reading
- Interactive writing
- Literature reactions and extensions
- Arts integration
- Phonetics games

Materials

Materials used in the program:

- Trade books
- Leveled books
- Syllable tiles
- Word tiles
- Letter tiles
- Alphabet charts
- Alphabet toy sets
- Audio books
- Big books
- Syllable BINGO

Technology used in the program: Technology is used as a tool to enhance language skills, for writing, to respond to literature, and for literacy activities.

Assessment

Assessments used to evaluate students' progress:

- Running records
- Work samples
- Classroom observation

Articulation

Connections: George Mason University

How the program develops home-school connections: Students are assigned a book to read at home each week with parents or family members.

How the program promotes parent involvement: Family Literacy Nights are held throughout the year. These events are opportunities for parents to learn about the importance of reading at home, maintaining the first language and participating in their child's education. Parents can not only learn more about how to help their children in school through this program, they can also personally connect with the school and talk with their children's teachers. Consistent contact between parents and teachers in the home language encourages parents to understand the United States educational process, remain informed, participate in decision making, and generally become more active in their children's education.

Opportunities for using the heritage language and developing cultural knowledge outside the program: Bailey's Elementary School offers a Spanish partial immersion program, and other Spanish programs are offered at libraries and churches.

Financial Support

Types of financial support the program receives:

- In-kind support from Fairfax County Public Schools
 - Funds
 - Use of facilities
 - Materials
- Funding from Title III of the No Child Left Behind Act
- Grants from corporations and foundations
- Individual donations

Additional assistance the program would like to receive: The HLLC would like to cultivate additional support from local and state governments.

Research

Research connected to the program:

A longitudinal study in conjunction with George Mason University is planned to evaluate the program's effects on elementary-aged participants, middle and high school tutors, parents and families, and the school culture.

Special challenges

Challenges the program has experienced: This program has consistently faced funding challenges but is making progress in forming relationships with the school district.

Insights: The mentoring aspect of this program is very powerful. The young students are taught by middle and high school students who earn a college scholarship for each completed year of service. The structure of the program enables students to participate for a possible twelve years, to develop strong positive attitudes and skills that lead to success.