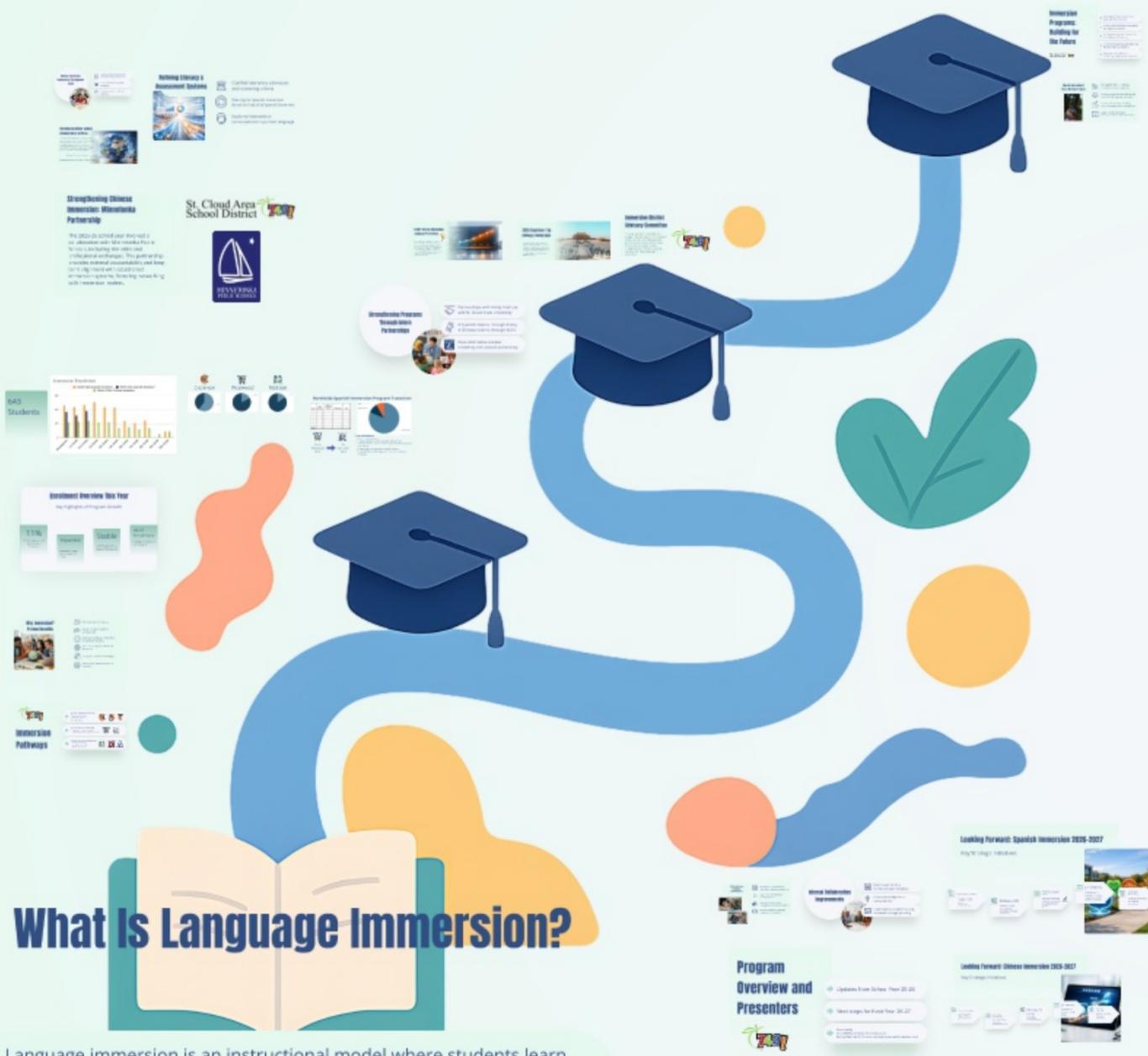


Immersion Program Update

2025–2026 School Year

Anna Willhite
Director of E-12 Education

Kathryn Simacek
K-5 Curriculum, Instruction and Immersion Lead



What Is Language Immersion?

Language immersion is an instructional model where students learn grade-level academic content in a target language (Spanish or Mandarin Chinese), developing bilingualism and biliteracy.

English literacy develops alongside the partner language using an 80/20 model in elementary.

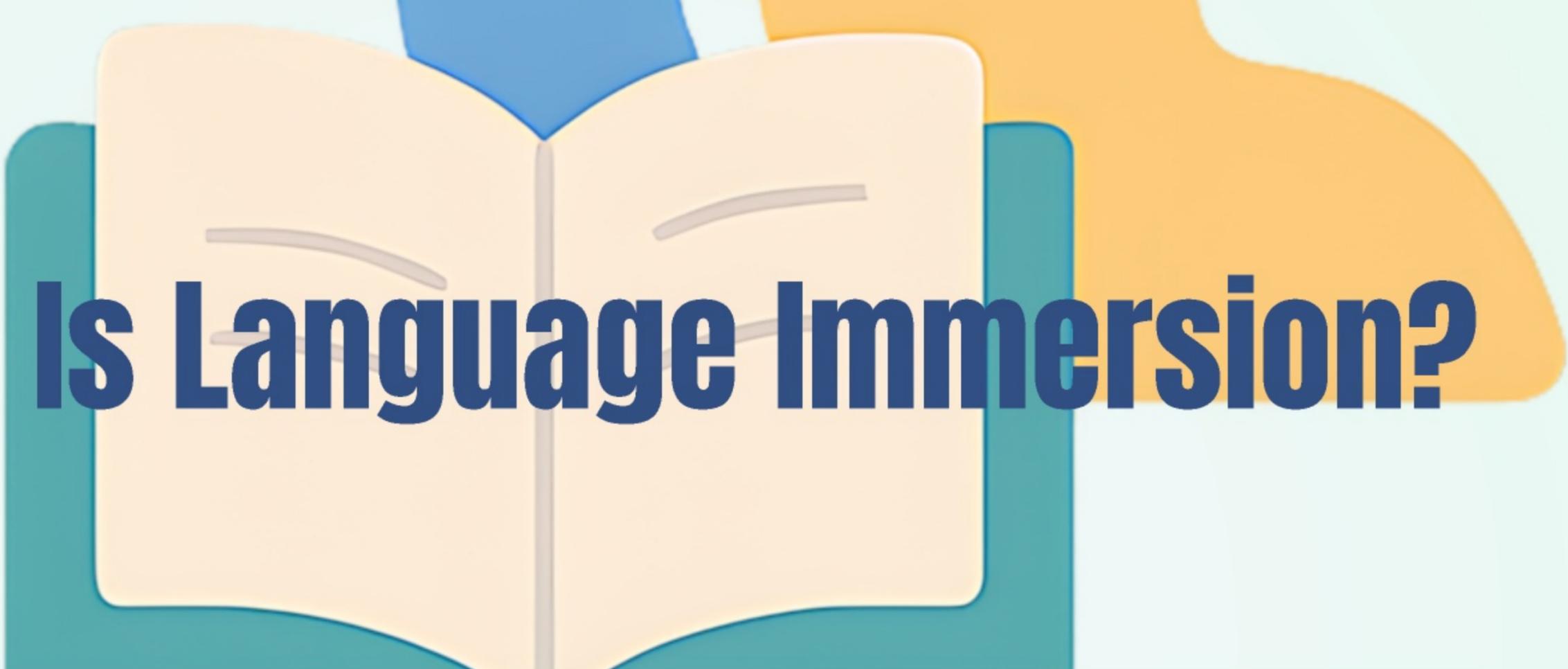
Program Overview and Presenters



→ Updates from School Year 25-26

→ Next steps for Next Year 26-27

→ Presented by
Anna Willhite, Director of E-12 Education
Kathryn Simacek, K-5 Curriculum, Instruction, and Immersion Lead



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Immersion Pathways



Spanish Immersion: South Side

Clearview Elementary
South Middle School
Tech High School



Spanish Immersion: North Side

- Westwood Elementry (Current)
- Kennedy Community School (Future)

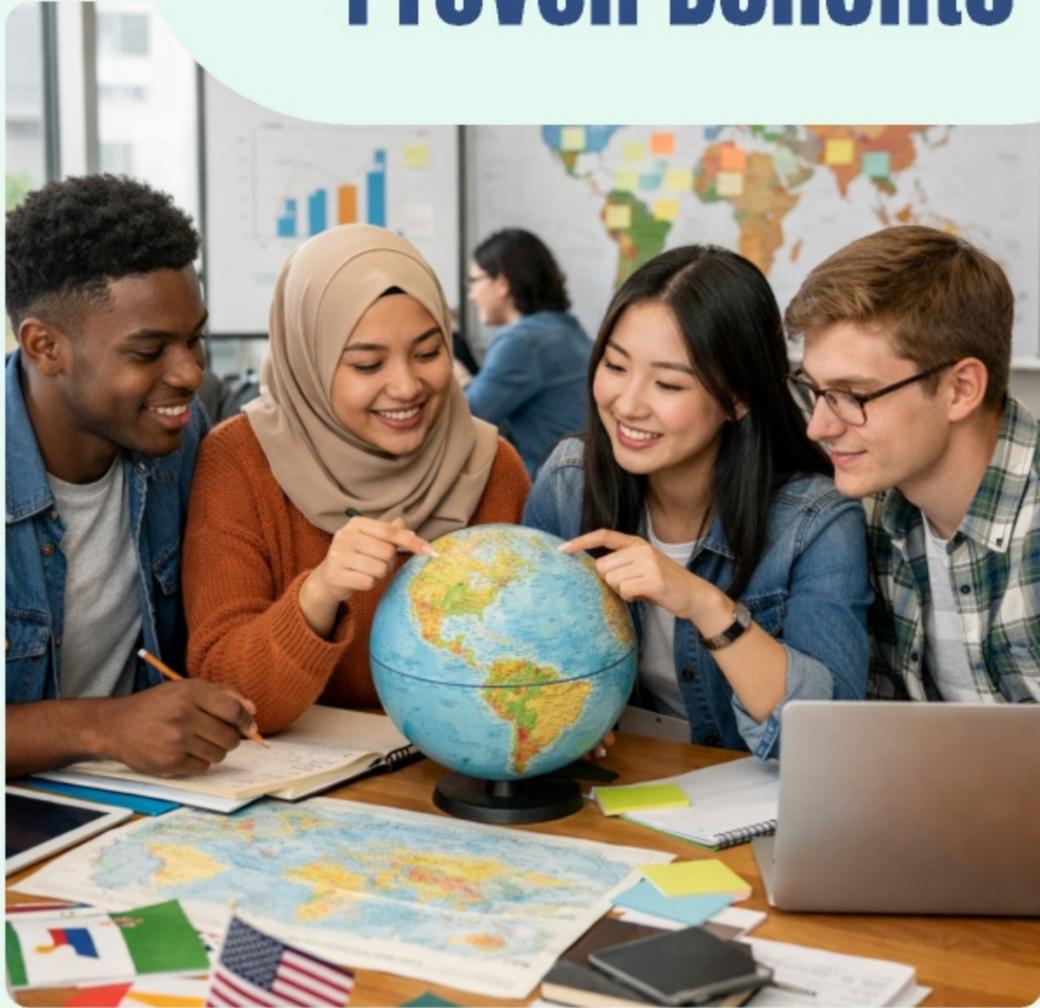


Chinese Immersion: District Wide

- Madison Elementary
- North Middle School
- Apollo High School



Why Immersion? Proven Benefits



Bilingualism & Biliteracy



Equal or Higher Academic Achievement



Strong Metalinguistic Awareness & Cognitive Flexibility



Cultural Competence & Global Readiness



Long-term Career Advantages



Strong Programmatic Asset for Families

Enrollment Overview This Year

Key Highlights of Program Growth

11%

Of 742 students in K-5
are enrolled in
Immersion

Expanded

Westwood Program
now includes 2nd
Grade

Stable

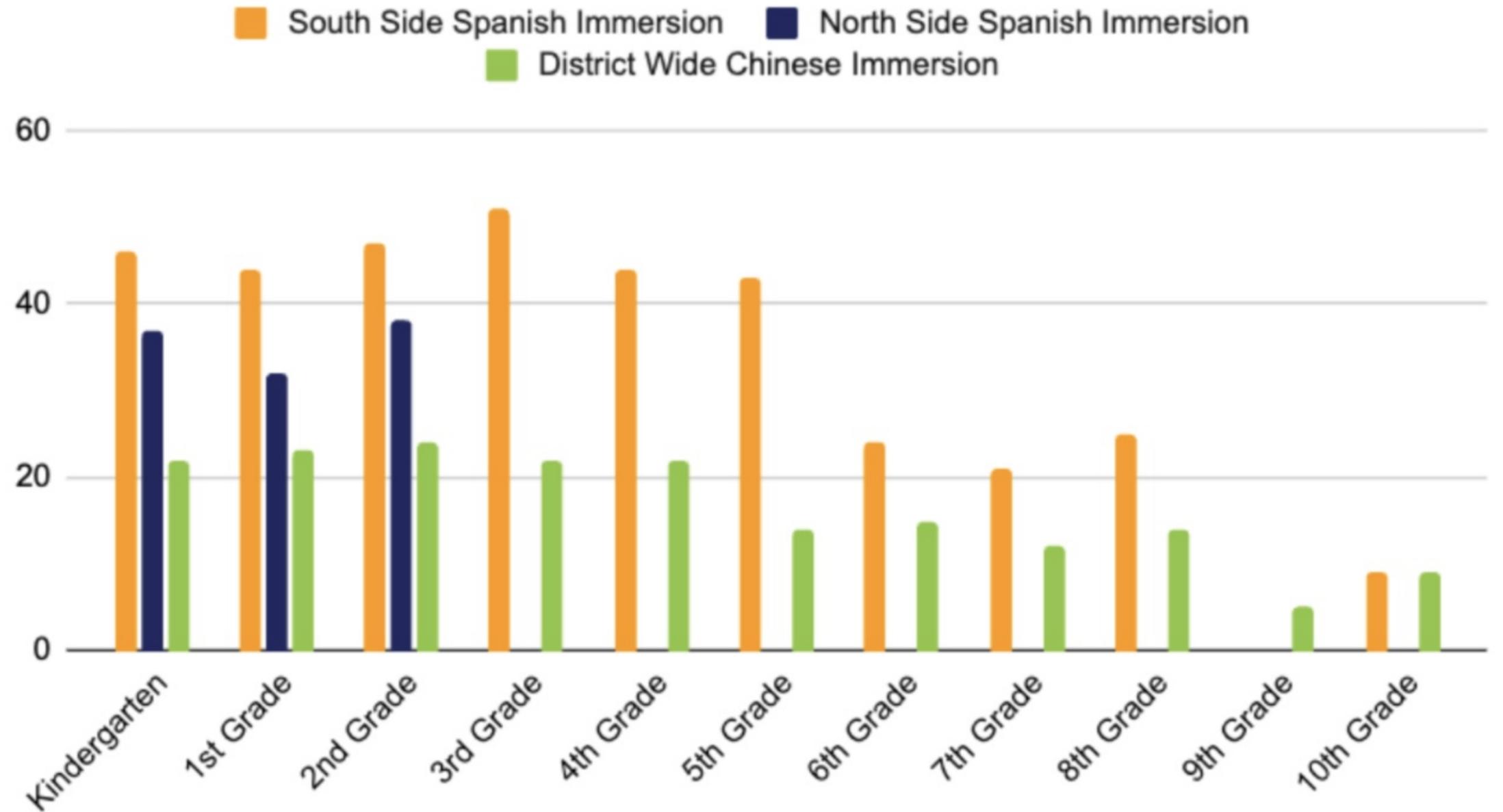
Immersion enrollment
stable at Elementary Level
at Madison and Clearview

26-27
Enrollment

Kindergarten interest
is strong so far

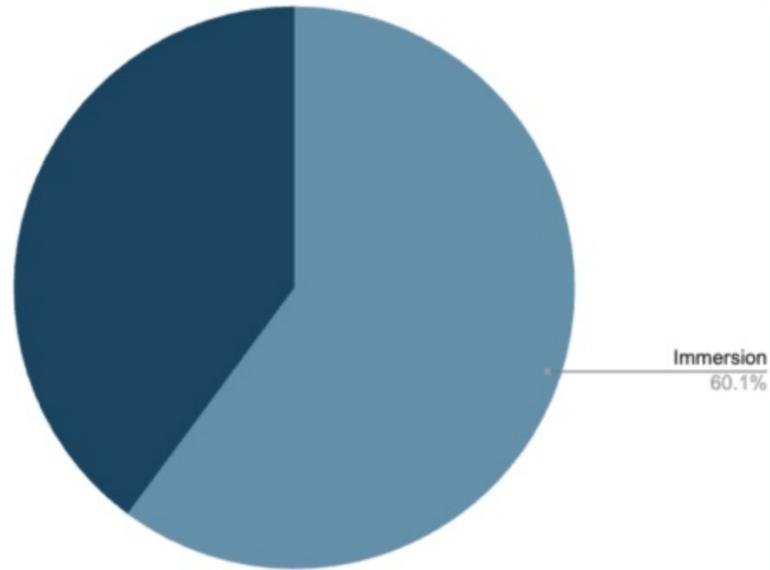
643
Students

Immersion Enrollment

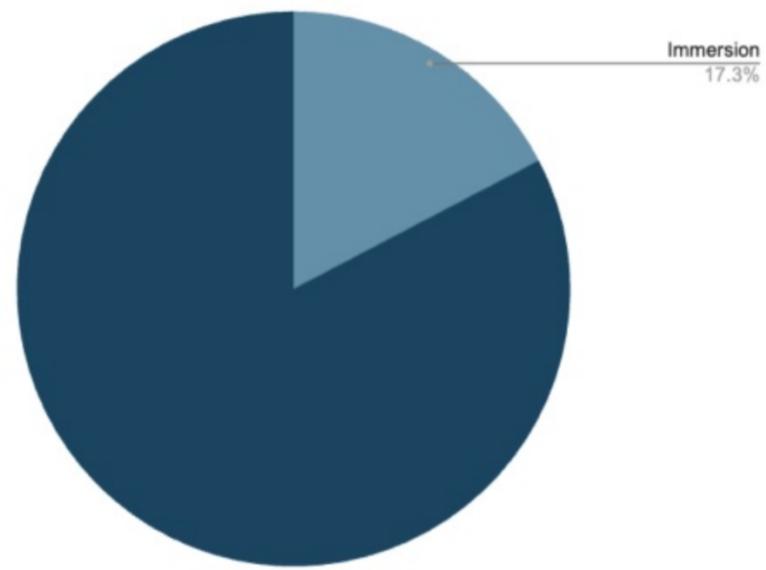




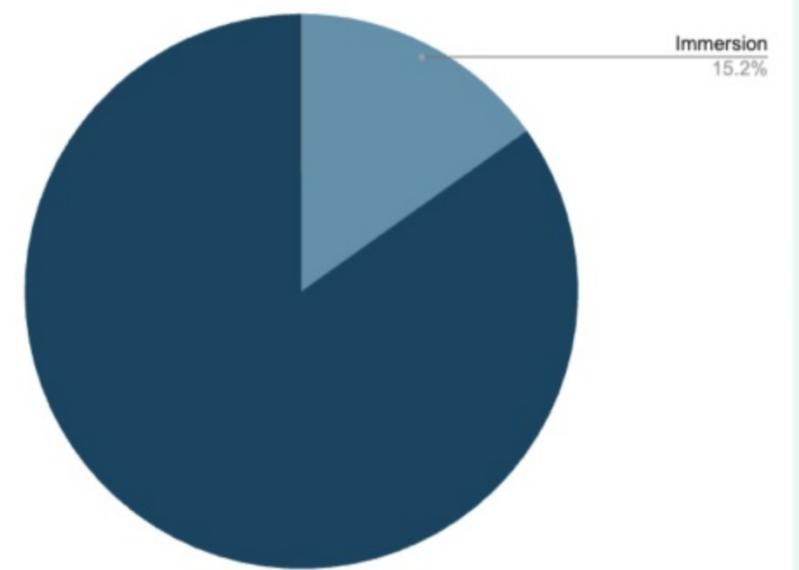
Clearview



Westwood

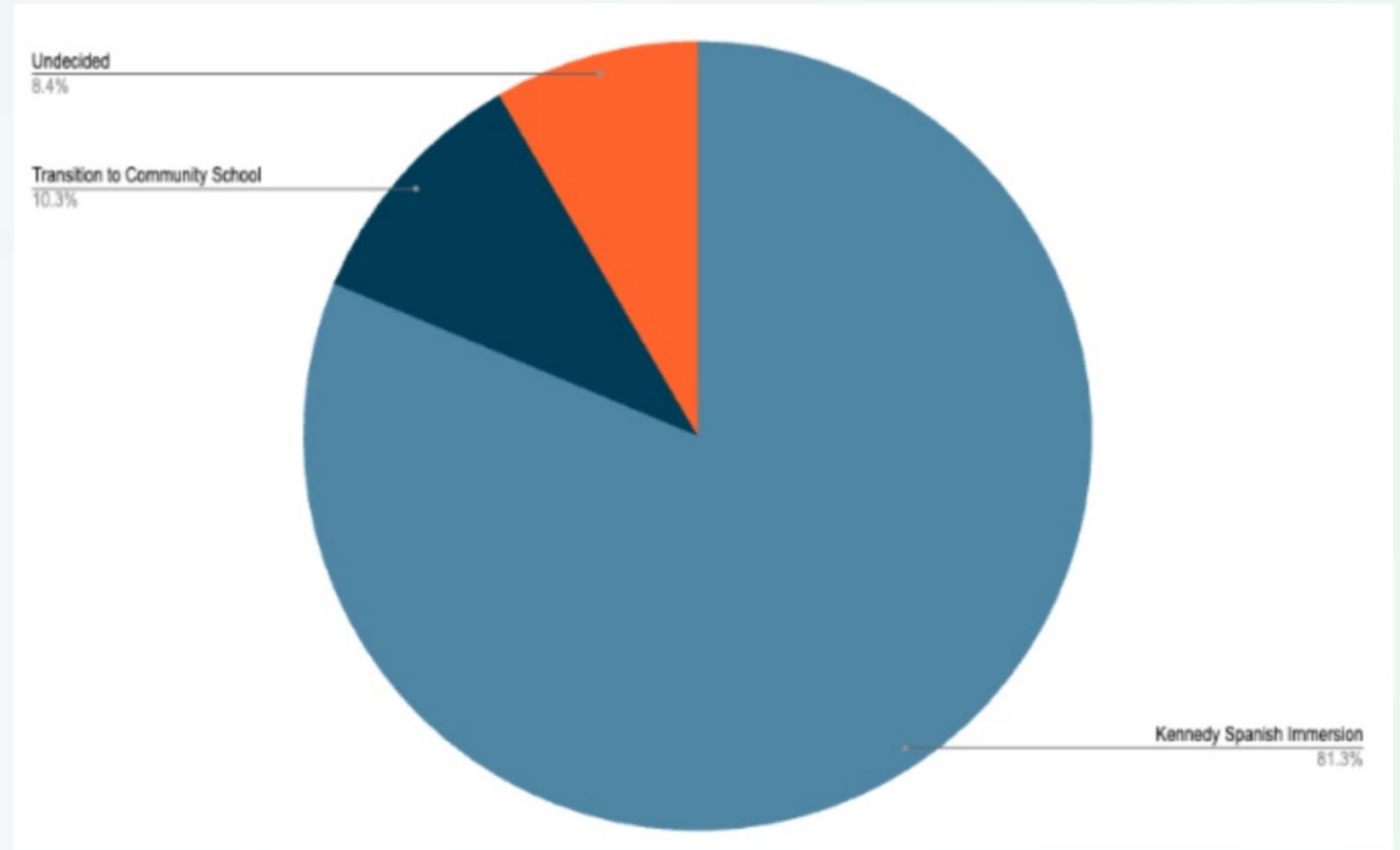


Madison

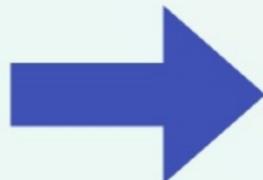


Northside Spanish Immersion Program Transition

Grade	YES to Kennedy	NO to community school	UNDECIDED	Total
K	16	1	1	18
K	15	2	1	18
1	14	1	1	16
1	13	2	1	16
2	16	3	1	20
2	13	2	4	19
TOTAL	87	11	9	107



From
Westwood
PK-5



To
Kennedy
PK-8

Transition Supports:

- District communication
- Student conference communication with families
- Individual follow up for transitioning and undecided students and families
- Site transition planning meetings with leaders
- Principal Welcome Messages with tour and spring event invitations

Strengthening Chinese Immersion: Minnetonka Partnership

The 2025-26 school year involved a collaboration with Minnetonka Public Schools, including site visits and professional exchanges. This partnership provides external accountability and long-term alignment with established immersion systems, fostering networking with immersion leaders.

St. Cloud Area School District 



Developing Sister School Connections in China

This year, we established communication with potential sister schools in China, laying the groundwork for future cultural exchange opportunities. This initiative strengthens authentic global connections for our Chinese Immersion program.

Beijing 21st Century School

Hangzhou Greentown Yuhua Primary School



Chinese Immersion: Professional Development Focus



Professional development in
Chinese literacy instruction



Enhanced target-language
pedagogy



Biliteracy instructional best
practices

Refining Literacy & Assessment Systems



Clarified late-entry admission and screening criteria

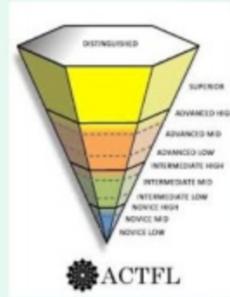


Data dig for Spanish Immersion Based on English & Spanish Screeners



Explored intervention conversations in partner language

STAMP Testing: Measuring Language Proficiency



Avant Assessment's STAMP test measures student proficiency in reading, writing, speaking, and listening, aligning with ACTFL levels. This year, we administered STAMP to even-numbered grade levels, developed proficiency targets based on national norms, and began integrating STAMP data into instructional planning.



Strengthening Programs Through Intern Partnerships



Partnerships with Amity Institute
and St. Cloud State University



4 Spanish interns through Amity,
4 Chinese interns through SCSU



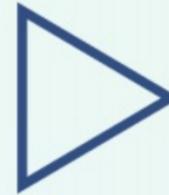
Expanded native speaker
modeling and cultural authenticity



Effective Enrollment Campaign & Communications



Developed comprehensive immersion enrollment materials



'Day in the Life' videos for Kindergarteners



Strengthened proactive messaging and program identity



Enhanced visibility supports program sustainability

2026 Capstone Trip- Chinese Immersion

This June, our 8th and 9th graders will embark on their capstone trip to China. This opportunity allows them to become immersed in the language and culture that they have studied for years. This trip is made possible in partnership with SCSU connections.



Immersion District Advisory Committee

This year, we had the opportunity to engage immersion parents in an advisory committee. This committee provided parent input for key immersion issues. Some topics discussed included strengthening enrollment, reviewing systems, and improving program advertising.



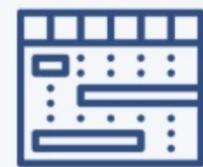
Internal Collaboration Improvements



Established monthly immersion team meetings



Cross-school alignment conversations



Goal: reactive problem-solving, increased strategic planning



Looking Forward: Chinese Immersion 2026-2027

Key Strategic Initiatives



Curriculum Review

Structured review and pilot of language arts curriculum. Curriculum pilot planned for next year.



Sister School Development

Continue fostering sister school connections in China.



Biliteracy PD

Strengthen professional development focused on biliteracy.



J-1 Interns

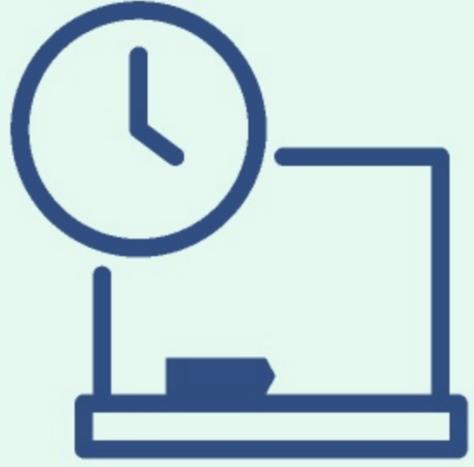
Continue J-1 Interns through SCSU.



Enrollment Monitoring

Ongoing monitoring of program enrollment.





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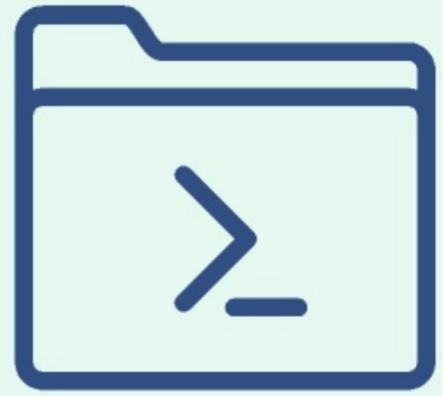
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Looking Forward: Spanish Immersion 2026-2027

Key Strategic Initiatives



SLA Curriculum Pilot

Continue pilot of Spanish Language Arts curricula

Caminos
Emerger Juntos
Mosaico Lectoescritura



Biliteracy PD

Establish SLA pilot structure and strengthen biliteracy-focused PD.



Westwood Program Move

Relocate Westwood program to Kennedy and expand to 3rd grade.



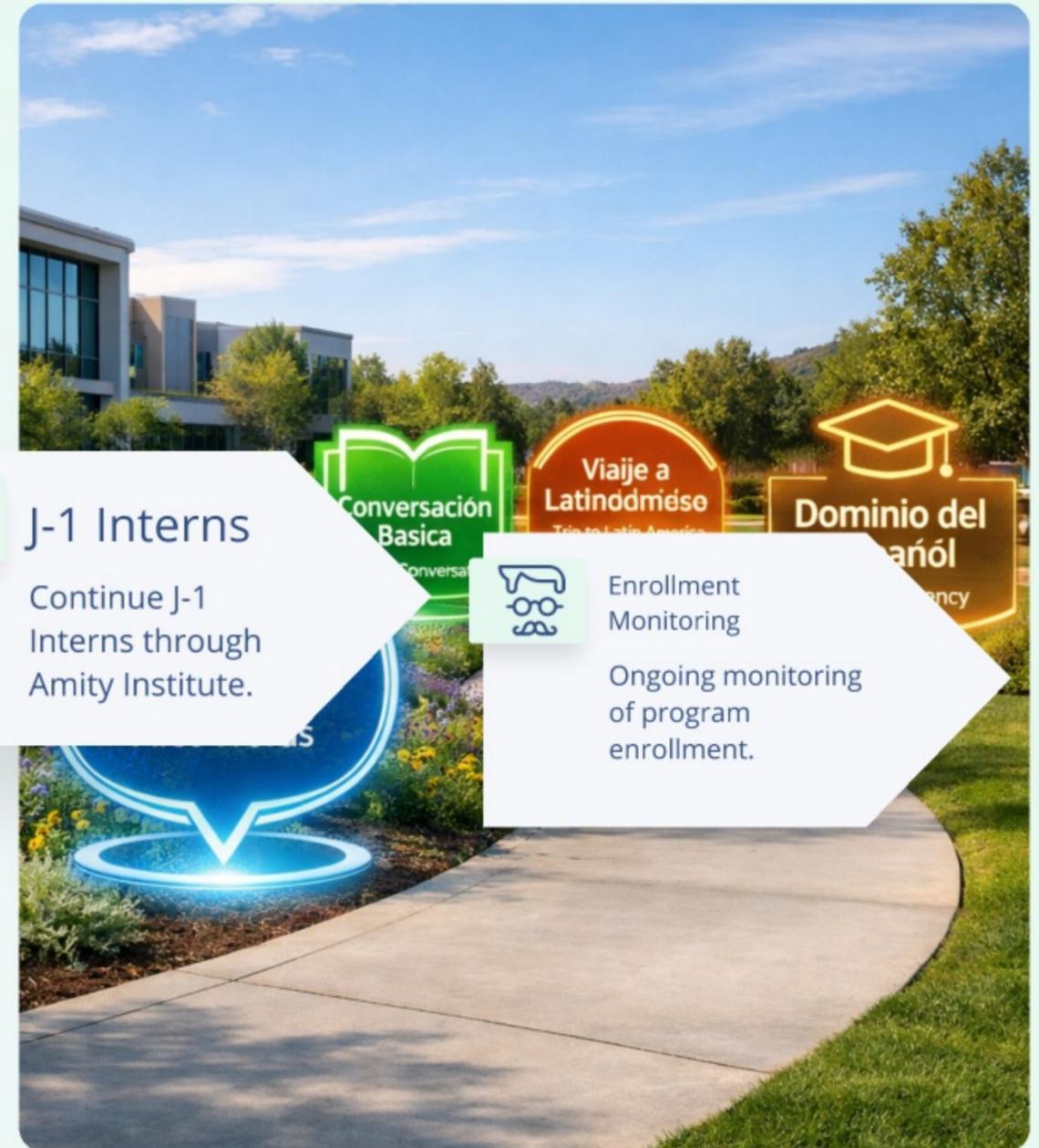
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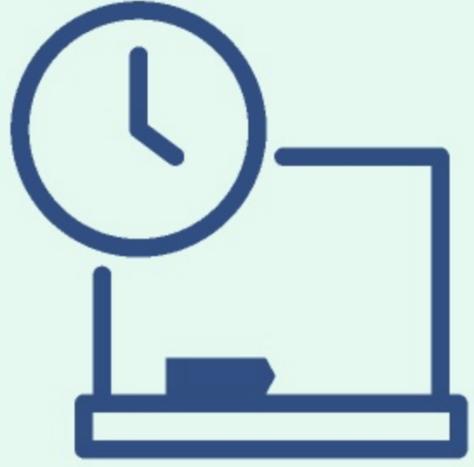
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Camino

Emerger Juntos

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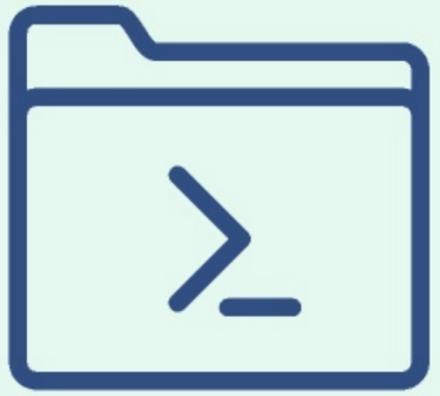
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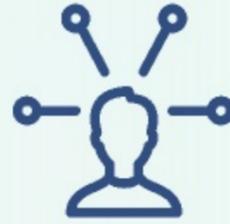
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Ongoing monitoring
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Shared Instructional Focus Moving Forward



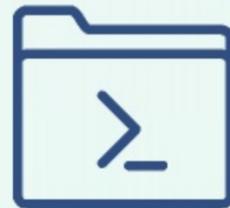
Strengthen Tier 1 biliteracy practices across programs.



Develop shared understanding and use of STAMP data for instruction.



Increase proficiency benchmarking clarity and support growth management.



Support seamless program articulation and strategic intervention.

Immersion Programs: Building for the Future

➔ Growing and Systematizing our programs for efficiency

➔ Aligning and building sustainability for long-term success

➔ Strengthening global connections and cultural authenticity

➔ This year focused on strengthening the foundational elements

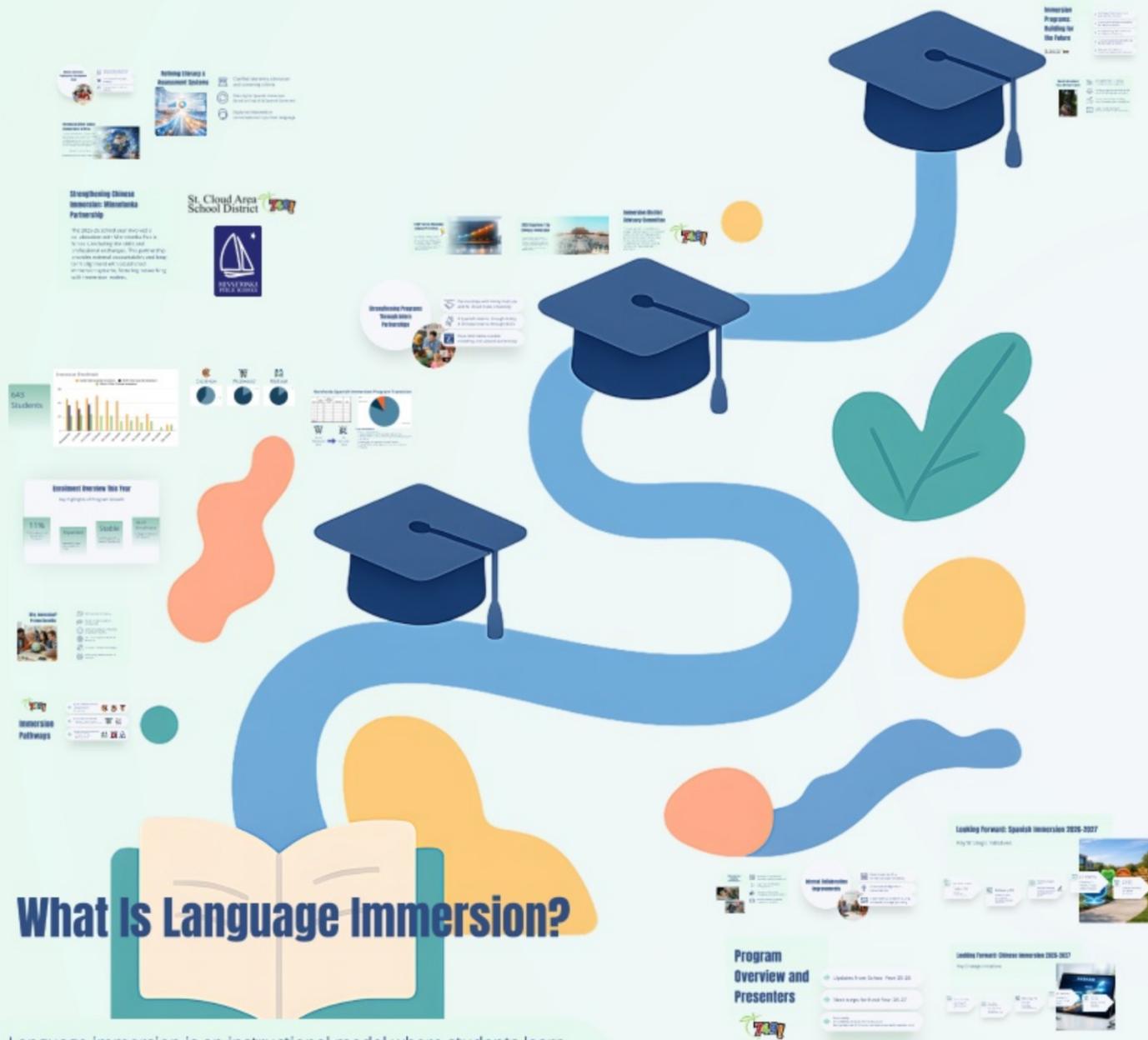
➔ Next year will emphasize intentional instructional refinement

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- Chinese Immersion Presenters

Looking Forward: Spanish Immersion 2025-2027

Looking Forward: Chinese Immersion 2025-2027

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