

**BALTIMORE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**DATE:** January 24, 2012

**TO:** **BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**FROM:** Dr. Joe A. Hairston, Superintendent

**SUBJECT:** **REPORT ON *LANGUAGE!* PROGRAM**

**ORIGINATOR:** Renee A. Foose, Deputy Superintendent

**RESOURCE**  
**PERSON(S):** Roger Plunkett, Assistant Superintendent, Curriculum and Instruction  
Kathleen McMahon, Executive Director, Special Programs

**INFORMATION**

That the Board of Education receives a report on the *Language!* program.

Attachment I – Executive Summary  
Attachment II – Brief Research Report  
Attachment II - PowerPoint

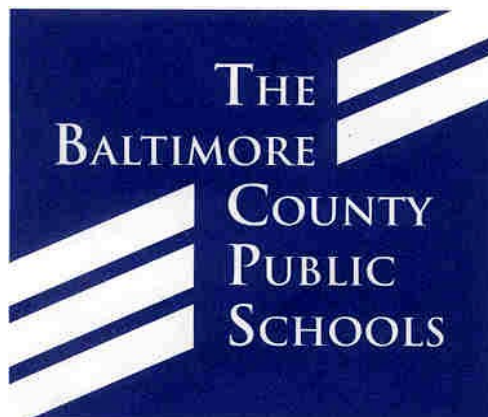
**BALTIMORE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
**Executive Summary**

**Report on *Language!***  
**January 24, 2012**

*Language!* is an intensive language arts intervention program that is used with identified secondary students who are struggling readers. The goal of the intervention is to provide students with grade-level proficiency by using a sequential, cumulative, skill-based instructional format that addresses all learning styles. This program targets a small number of students and is intended to supplement the core instructional program.

BCPS has pre- and post-instruction information for 5,771 students in Grades 6 through 10 who participated in the *Language!* program for two years. The data show that the majority of enrolled students demonstrated growth on the internal measures within the program. The Office of Research, Accountability and Assessment is gathering additional disaggregated data to be shared with the Board of Education.

Next steps include continuing to collect and analyze data to determine the ongoing impact of the program, recertifying of central office language arts personnel so they are available to provide support to the program, and central office collaboration with middle and high school principals on instructional decisions to support students with language arts learning needs.



## **Brief Research Report**

### **An Examination of *Language!* September 9, 2011**

Office of Research  
Dr. Tamela H. Hawley, Director  
Dr. Renard A. Adams, Coordinator  
Dr. Gary L. Brager, Supervisor  
Samantha Murray, Specialist  
Everett Elliott, Resource Teacher

**Dr. Joe A. Hairston**  
Superintendent of Schools

## Background

This report was conducted to examine two research questions regarding the *Language!* program. Dr. Joe A. Hairston and Dr. Renee Foose requested that the following research questions be examined:

Question 1. What students have been served by the *Language!* program?

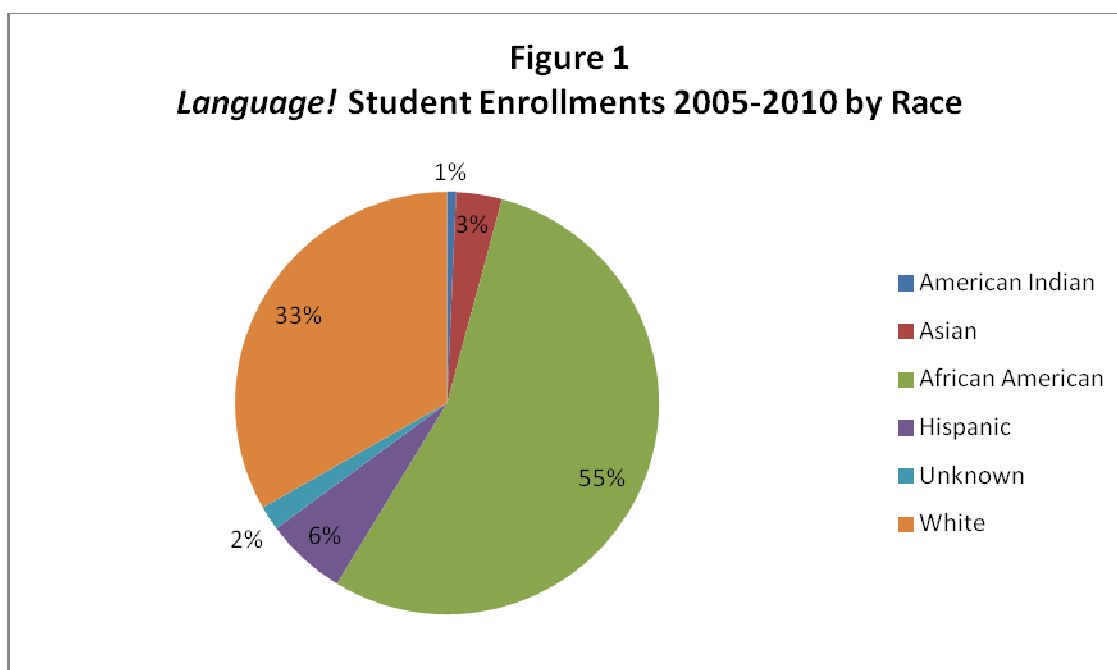
Question 2. How has the program impacted student growth in reading based upon measures within the *Language!* program?

## Methodology

Student data entered into the *Language!* program database system were extracted and matched with unique identification numbers within BCPS data systems. The resulting dataset contained 5,771 student records. Students' demographic information and performance measures associated with the *Language!* program were then analyzed for this report.

### What students have been served by the *Language!* program

Between the fall of 2005 and spring of 2010, 5,771 students were served by the *Language!* program. The majority of those students were African American (55%), with White (33%) students comprising the second most-served student group. Minority students comprised 65% of all students served by the *Language!* program. Figure 1 shows the *Language!* enrollment by race.

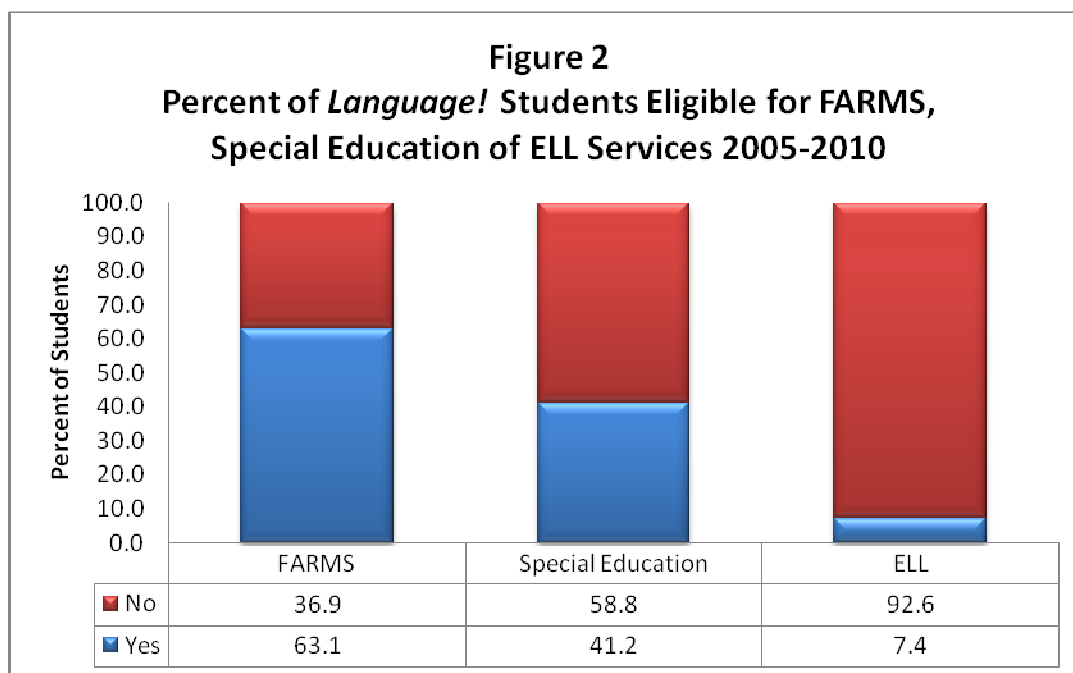


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## An Examination of *Language!* Baltimore County Public Schools

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Figure 2 shows the percentage of *Language!* students eligible for special services. Of students served by the *Language!* program, 63% were eligible for FARMS services, 41% were eligible for special education services, and a small percentage (7%) were eligible for ELL services.



### How has the program impacted student growth in reading based upon measures within the *Language!* program?

The *Test of Silent Word Reading Fluency (TOSWRF)* measures a student's ability to recognize printed words accurately and efficiently. The *Degrees of Reading Power (DRP)* is a criterion-referenced reading comprehension tests for students in grades 1 through 12. Both the TOSWRF and the DRP are internal measures used within the *Language!* program. Students' achievement scores on these tests were converted to a grade equivalent score.

The grade equivalent score expresses the grade level of students who, on average, demonstrate a particular achievement score when tested. Students demonstrating on-grade achievement typically obtain grade equivalent scores which meet or exceed the grade and month of the school year in which they are enrolled. That is, a grade 4 student who is on grade level at the beginning of the school year may earn a grade equivalent score in reading of 4<sup>th</sup> grade, 0 months, which is written as 4.0. Grade equivalents can be useful for measuring individual growth from one year to the next and for estimating a student's developmental status in terms of grade level. By comparing students' starting reading grade equivalents to the grade equivalents on either the

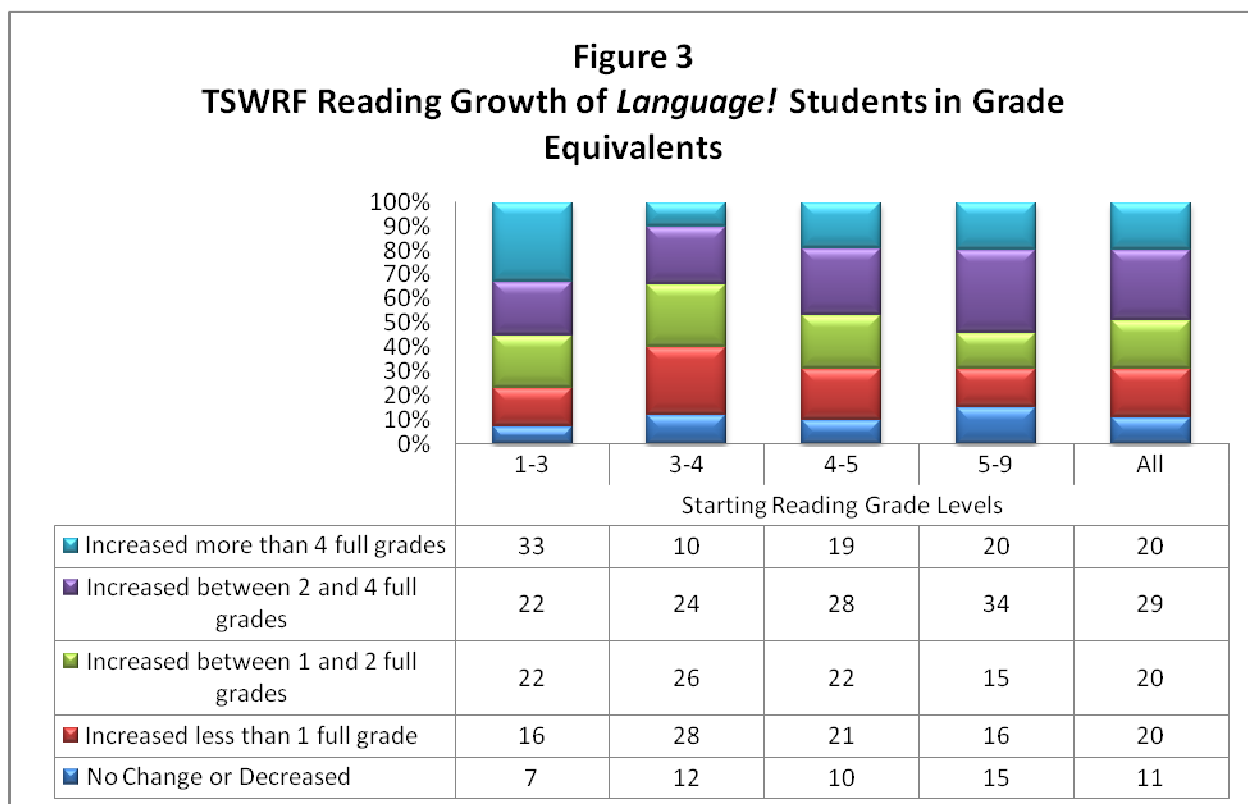
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TOSWRF or DRP after two years of instruction, student growth within the program was examined. Student growth is presented in Figures 3 and 4.

Figure 3 shows the percentage of students making various amounts of growth on the TOSWRF, grouped by starting grade equivalent tiers. For the total group with all tiers combined, 89% of students exhibited growth. Among starting grade equivalent tiers, the greatest student growth was seen within the 1-3 grade level tier where 93% of students demonstrated an increase, with 33% demonstrating an increase of more than four grade equivalents.

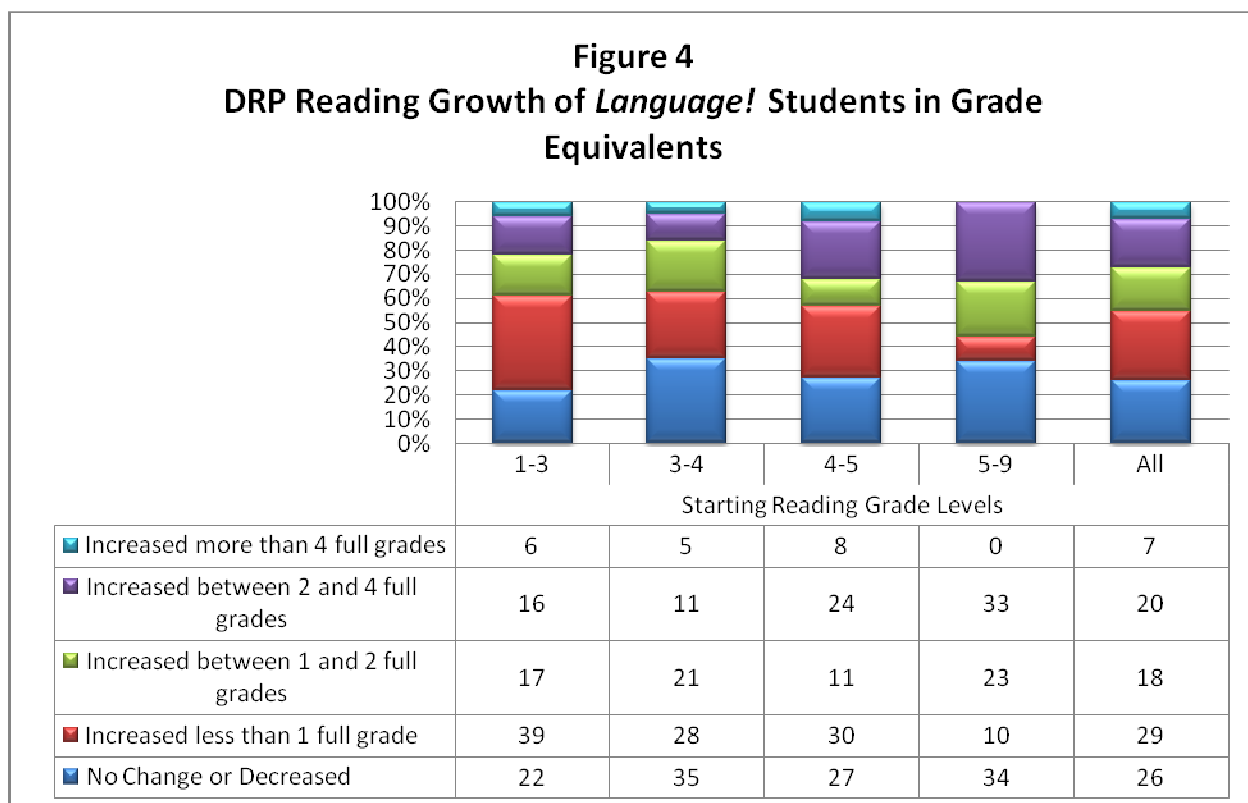


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Figure 4 shows the percentage of students making various amounts of growth on the DRP, grouped by starting grade equivalent tiers. While growth on this measure was not as strong as on the TOSWRF, it was still positive. For the total group with all tiers combined, 74% of students exhibited growth. Among the starting grade equivalent tiers, the greatest student growth was again seen within the 1-3 grade level tier where 78% of students demonstrated growth as measured by the DRP.



### Conclusions

With regard to the research questions, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. 5,771 students were enrolled in the *Language!* program between 2005 and 2010. Sixty-five percent (65%) of all enrolled students were minority students, 63% were eligible for FARMS services, and 41% were eligible for special education services.
2. After two years of instruction, the vast majority of students enrolled in *Language!* demonstrated growth on the internal measures within the program.
  - a. Eighty-nine percent (89%) of students demonstrated growth as measured by the *Test of Silent Word Fluency*; and
  - b. Seventy-four percent (74%) of students demonstrated growth as measured by the *Degrees of Reading Power*.



# *Language!* Update

Board of Education  
January 24, 2012



# *Language!* 2005–2006

- Dr. Hairston introduced a reading/language arts intervention for secondary students to prepare for the English HSA.

# What is *Language!* ?

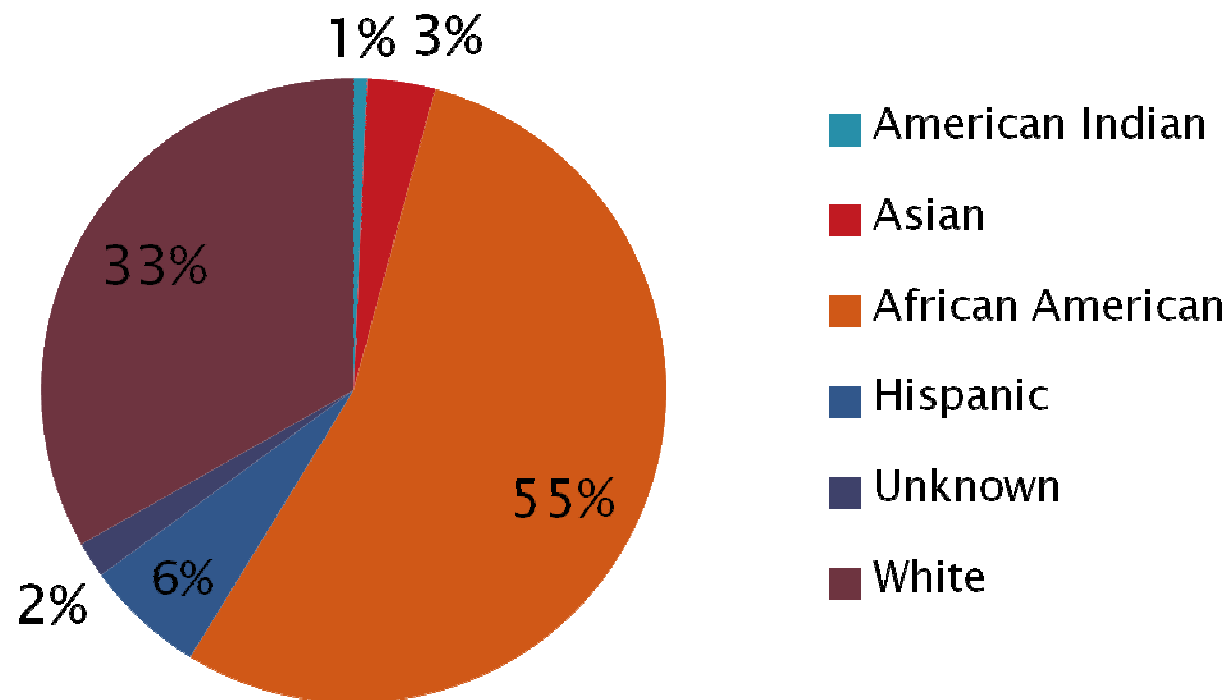
*Language!* is a comprehensive reading and language arts intervention/acceleration program designed for older, struggling readers.

# *Language!* 2006–2007

- The targeted audience was Grade 6–10 students.
- During the initial year, it was offered in every high school and middle school.

# *Language!* 2006–2010

## Student Enrollments by Race



# Percent of *Language!* Students Eligible for Special Services 2006–2010

FARMS	Special Education	ELL
63.1%	41.2%	7.4%

# *Language!*

- Progress in *Language!* is monitored through the use of two assessments:
- *Test of Silent Word Reading Fluency*
- *Degrees of Reading Power*

# *Language!* Conclusions

- The results of 5,771 students' *Language!* assessments were reviewed.
- The following results are for students who participated in two years of instruction.

# *Test of Silent Word Reading Fluency*

Starting Reading Grade Level	1–3	3–4	4–5	5–9	All
% Students with 1 to 4+ Years Growth	77%	60%	69%	69%	69%



# *Degrees of Reading Power* (Comprehension)

Starting Reading Grade Level	1–3	3–4	4–5	5–9	All
% Students with 1 to 4+ Years Growth	39%	37%	43%	56%	45%

# Principal's Comments

- ▶ Dr. Jane Barranger, principal of Towson High School, has been asked to provide testimony about the use of *Language!* in her school over the last seven years.

# *Language!* Next Steps

- Recertify members of the English office as *Language!* trainers.
- Identify schools offering *Language!* to students in 2012–2013.
- Provide professional development and support to teachers.

# *Language!* Next Steps

- Identify instructional conditions where more student success was experienced.
- Confirm a consistent method for recording *Language!* progress.
- Provide consistent evaluation of interventions.